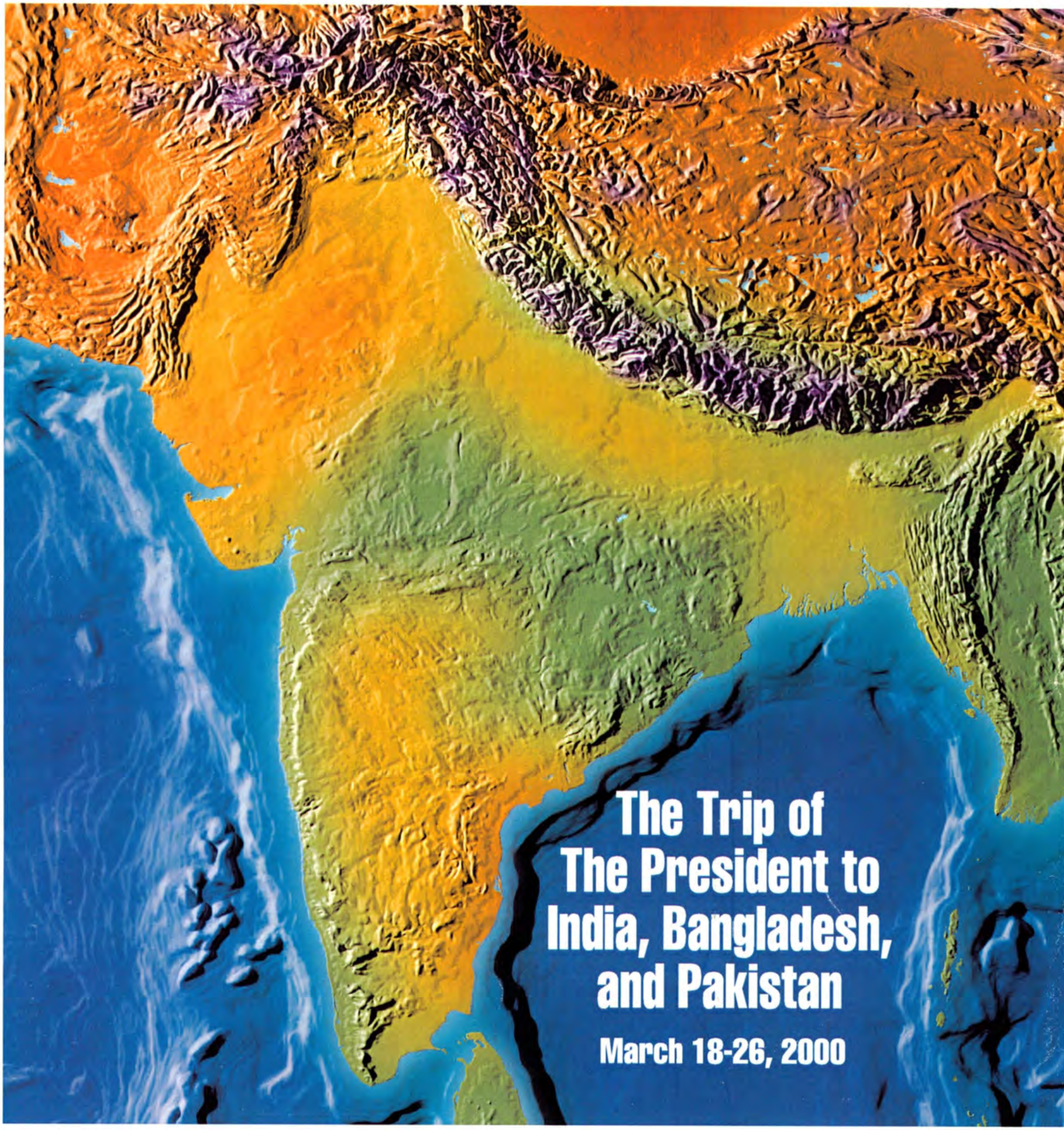
The Trip of
The President to
India, Bangladesh,
and Pakistan
March 18-26, 2000

The Trip of The President to India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan

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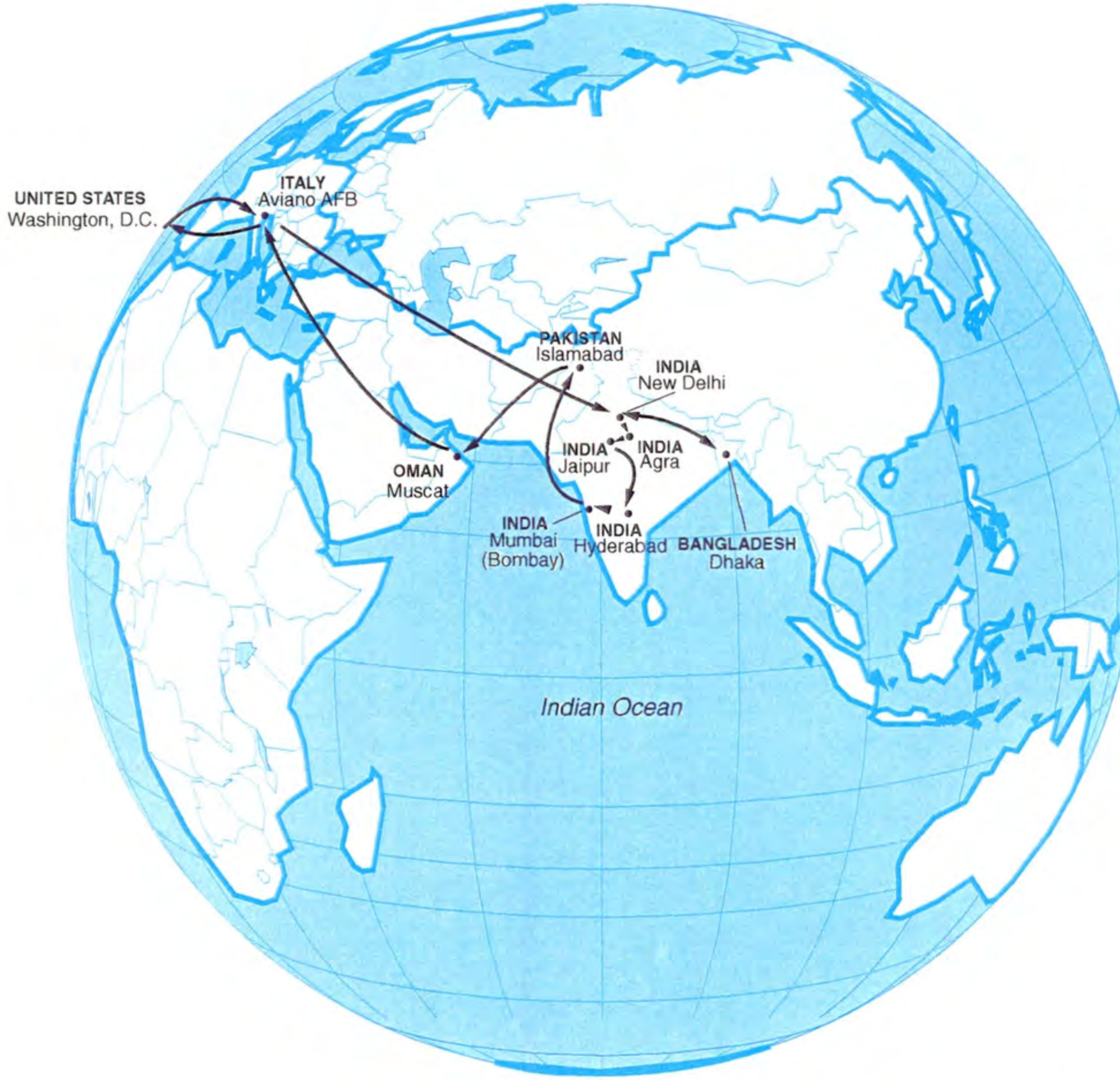

To/From:	Distance	Flying Time
Washington, D.C. (Andrews AFB) to Aviano AFB, Italy	4,338 miles	7 hours, 45 minutes
Aviano AFB, Italy to New Delhi, India	3,633 miles	8 hours, 25 minutes
New Delhi, India to Dhaka, Bangladesh	885 miles	2 hours, 15 minutes
Dhaka, Bangladesh to New Delhi, India	885 miles	2 hours, 40 minutes
New Delhi, India to Agra, India	110 miles	1 hour, 15 minutes
Agra, India to Jaipur, India	135 miles	1 hour, 25 minutes
Jaipur, India to Hyderabad, India	688 miles	2 hours, 15 minutes
Hyderabad, India to Mumbai [Bombay], India	383 miles	1 hour, 10 minutes
Mumbai, India to Islamabad, Pakistan	1,003 miles	3 hours, 15 minutes
Islamabad, Pakistan to Muscat, Oman	1,133 miles	3 hours, 45 minutes
Muscat, Oman to Aviano AFB, Italy	2,960 miles	7 hours, 15 minutes
Aviano AFB, Italy to Washington, D.C. (Andrews AFB)	4, 338 miles	8 hours, 50 minutes

Clinton Presidential Records
Digital Records Marker

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This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Divider Title: ______________________________

Washington, D.C. (EST) 0	Pakistan +10	India +10.5	Bangladesh +11
0600	1600	1630	1700
0700	1700	1730	1800
0800	1800	1830	1900
0900	1900	1930	2000
1000	2000	2030	2100
1100	2100	2130	2200
1200	2200	2230	2300
1300	2300	2330	2400
1400	2400	0030	*0100*
1500	*0100*	*0130*	*0200*
1600	*0200*	*0230*	*0300*
1700	*0300*	*0330*	*0400*
1800	*0400*	*0430*	*0500*
1900	*0500*	*0530*	*0600*
2000	*0600*	*0630*	*0700*
2100	*0700*	*0730*	*0800*
2200	*0800*	*0830*	*0900*
2300	*0900*	*0930*	*1000*
2400	*1000*	*1030*	*1100*
0100	*1100*	*1130*	*1200*
0200	*1200*	*1230*	*1300*
0300	*1300*	*1330*	*1400*
0400	*1400*	*1430*	*1500*
0500	*1500*	*1530*	*1600*
0600	*1600*	*1630*	*1700*

+1 day

Notes on Gifts and Customs

Gifts

As set forth in 22 CFR Part 3, the Foreign Gifts Act specifies that employees and members of their families may accept and retain a gift tendered as a souvenir or mark of courtesy from foreign governments or their representatives if it is of "minimal value," which is currently defined as a retail value in the United States, at the time of acceptance, of $225 or less. However, an employee may accept a gift valued at over $225 only if to refuse it "would likely cause offense or embarrassment or otherwise adversely affect the foreign relations of the United States," and even then such a gift is deemed to have been accepted on behalf of the United States and, upon acceptance, becomes the property of the United States. Any such gift must, within 60 days after acceptance, either be deposited for disposal with the recipient's employing agency, or, subject to the approval of the employing agency, deposited with that agency for official use. For the President and First Lady of the United States, the depository for gifts is the White House Gift Unit, 457 Old Executive Office Building.

The Attorney General may bring a civil action in the U.S. District Court against any employee who knowingly has solicited or accepted a gift from a foreign government not consented to by the revised statute, or who has failed to deposit or report such a gift as the law requires. A penalty may be assessed in such a case in any amount not to exceed the retail value of the gift improperly solicited or received plus $5,000.

Customs

Everyone will be expected to fill out a customs declaration form to be returned to the steward just prior to returning to a U.S. point of entry. You will need to note on the declaration when:

- The total fair retail value of articles acquired abroad exceeds $400, or if acquired in American Samoa, Guam, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, $800.
- More than 1 liter (33.8 fl. oz.) of alcoholic beverages, 200 cigarettes, or more than 100 cigars are included. Or if returning from American Samoa, Guam, or the U.S. Virgin Islands: more than 4 liters (135.2 fl. oz.) of alcoholic beverages, 100 cigars, and 1,000 cigarettes.
- Some of the items are not intended for your personal or household use, such as commercial samples, items for sale or use in your business, or articles you are bringing home for another person.
- Articles acquired in the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, or Guam are being sent to the United States.
- A customs duty or internal revenue tax is collectible on any article in your possession.

Note: "Courtesy of Port" does not mean you do not have to fill out a declaration or that you will not have to pay customs duty. Your declarations will be reviewed by customs officials at the U.S. point of entry and you will be billed for any dutiable items purchased.

Prohibited and Restricted Articles

Some items must meet certain requirements, require a license or permit, or may be prohibited entry. Among these are:

- Absinthe
- Biological material
- Books protected by American copyright if unauthorized foreign reprints
- Candy, liquor-filled
- Copies of gold coins if not properly marked
- Electronic products subject to radiation emission standards
- Firearms and ammunition
- Food, drugs, and certain other items not approved by FDA
- Fruits, plants, vegetables and their products
- Hazardous articles (e.g., fireworks, dangerous toys, toxic or poisonous substances)
- Lottery tickets
- Meats, poultry, and products (e.g., sausage, pate, canned items)
- Motor vehicles not conforming to safety and emission standards
- Narcotics and dangerous drugs including medicine containing same
- Objects of Central and South American pre-Colombian Indian cultures
- Obscene articles and publications
- Pets (e.g., dogs, birds, turtles, monkeys)
- Seditious or treasonable matter
- Trademarked items (e.g., certain cameras, watches, perfumes)
- Switchblade knives
- Wildlife (birds, fish, animals) and endangered and protected species (e.g., pheasants; furskin; feathers, eggs, or skins of wild birds; articles from reptile skins, ivory, and whalebone).

Clinton Presidential Records
Digital Records Marker

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This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

Divider Title: **INDIA**

Base 802510 (R00903) 12-96

CURRENCY
CONVERSION

Indian Rupee at 43.5 = U.S. $

Rupee to U.S. Dollars

Rupee	U.S. $
0.50	0.01
1.00	0.02
10.00	0.23
25.00	0.57
43.50	1.00
50.00	1.15
75.00	1.72
100.00	2.30
125.00	2.87
150.00	3.45
200.00	4.60
500.00	11.49
1,000.00	22.99

U.S. Dollars to Rupee

U.S. $	Rupee
0.10	4.35
0.25	10.88
0.50	21.75
0.75	32.63
1.00	43.50
3.00	130.50
5.00	217.50
10.00	435.00
20.00	870.00
50.00	2,175.00
75.00	3,262.50
125.00	5,437.50
200.00	8,700.00

NOTE: All U.S. dollar values are rounded to the nearest U.S. cent. The value of the Indian Rupee fluctuates daily according to currency market conditions.

March 2000

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Washington, DC 20520
For recorded travel information, call 202-647-5225
Internet Address: http://travel.state.gov
For information by fax, call 202-647-3000 from your fax machine

Consular Information Sheet

India

September 14, 1999

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: India is an economically developing democratic republic. Tourist facilities varying in degree of comfort and amenities are widely available in the major population centers and main tourist areas.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: A passport and visa are required for entry into India for tourism or business. All visitors, including those on official U.S. Government business, must obtain visas at an Indian embassy or consulate abroad prior to entering the country. There are no provisions for visas upon arrival, and those arriving in India without visas bearing the correct validity dates and number of entries are subject to deportation. The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi can offer very little assistance when U.S. citizens arrive without visas. For further entry information, the traveler can contact the Embassy of India at 2536 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 939-9849 or 939-9806 or the Indian consulates in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Houston. Outside the United States, inquiries should be made at the nearest embassy or consulate of India.

TERRORISM: In July 1995, Western tourists, including two Americans, were kidnapped by terrorists in Kashmir. One hostage was brutally murdered and one escaped. The remaining hostages, including one American, have not been released and their whereabouts are unknown. In 1994, several tourists, including an American, were held for weeks by Kashmiri militants before police rescued them. Since January 1996, New Delhi has been the site of a dozen terrorist bombing attacks, some with multiple explosive devices (four exploded in October 1997 alone). These bomb blasts have occurred in public places, as well as on public transportation (common carriers), such as trains and buses. While no U.S. citizens were among the victims, other foreign visitors were reported injured. There is no pattern that has emerged in these attacks, nor is there any indication that they are directed against foreigners in general or Americans in particular. Nevertheless U.S. citizens should be alert to suspicious packages in public places, and avoid crowds, political demonstrations, and other manifestations of civil unrest.

AREAS OF INSTABILITY:

Countrywide - Major civil disturbances can pose risks to a traveler's personal safety and can disrupt transportation systems and city services. In response to such violence, Indian authorities may occasionally impose curfews and restrict travel. Political rallies and demonstrations in India have the potential for violence, especially during periods immediately preceding and following elections. In addition, the potential exists for religious and inter-caste violence. While such violence has not usually specifically targeted foreigners, mobs have attacked Christian workers, including foreigners. Missionary activity has aroused strong reactions, and an Australian missionary and his two sons were murdered by a mob in the eastern state of Orissa in January 1999. Nevertheless, the principal risk for foreigners appears to be that of becoming inadvertent victims. U.S. citizens should contact the U.S. Embassy or the nearest U.S. Consulate for further information about the current situation in areas where they wish to travel.

Kashmir - The Department of State strongly urges private U.S. citizens to avoid all travel to the Kashmir valley area of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. In addition to the American and other Western tourists taken hostage (and one murdered) in Kashmir by terrorists in 1995, an American tourist was fatally shot in Srinagar in 1994. Also in 1994, militants held two British hikers hostage for 18 days before releasing them. Within the state, the Ladakh region has been unaffected by terrorist violence. Srinagar, the Kashmir valley and the city of Jammu remain dangerous places where terrorist activities and violent civil disturbances continue. U.S. Government employees are prohibited from traveling to the state of Jammu and Kashmir without permission from the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi.

Northeast States - sporadic incidents of violence by ethnic insurgent groups, including the bombing of buses and trains, are reported from parts of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, and Meghalaya. While U.S. citizens have not been specifically targeted, visitors are cautioned not to travel outside major cities at night. Security laws are in force, and security personnel have been deployed by the central government in New Delhi to several northeast states. Travelers may check with the U.S. Consulate in Calcutta for information on current conditions. (Please see address below.)

India-Pakistan border - Tensions run high between India and Pakistan, particularly over Kashmir. The only official India-Pakistan border crossing point is between Atari, India, and Wagah, Pakistan. A Pakistani visa is required for entry to Pakistan.

Restricted Areas: Permission from the Indian government (from Indian diplomatic missions abroad or in some cases from the Ministry of Home Affairs) is required to visit the states of Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, parts of Kulu district and Spiti District of Himachal Pradesh, border areas of Jammu and Kashmir, areas of Uttar Pradesh, the area west of National Highway no. 15 running from Ganganagar to Sanchar in Rajasthan, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Union Territory of the Laccadive Islands.

MEDICAL FACILITIES: Adequate medical care is available in the major population centers, but is usually limited in the rural areas of the country. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate payment in cash for health services. U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States. Serious medical problems requiring hospitalization and/or medical evacuation can be extremely costly.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas may face extreme difficulties. Check with your own insurance company to confirm whether your policy applies overseas, including provision for medical evacuation. Ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas hospital or doctor or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses you incur. Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death. Useful information on medical emergencies abroad, including overseas insurance programs, is provided in the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs brochure "Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad," available on the Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet home page (http://travel.state.gov) or by autofax at 202-647-3000.

OTHER HEALTH INFORMATION: Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at telephone 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax 1-888-CDC-FAXX(1-888-232-3299), or by visiting the CDC Internet home page at http://www.cdc.gov.

INFORMATION ON CRIME: Petty crime, especially theft of personal property, is common. The loss or theft of a U.S. passport abroad should be reported immediately to local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Useful information on safeguarding valuables, protecting personal security, and other matters while traveling abroad is provided in the Department of State pamphlets "A Safe Trip Abroad" and "Tips for Travelers to South Asia." They are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402; via the Internet at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs, or from the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at http://travel.state.gov.

DRUG PENALTIES: Travelers are subject to the laws and legal practices of the country in which they travel. Penalties for possession of, use of, or trafficking in illegal drugs are strictly enforced. Convicted offenders in India can expect a minimum jail sentence of 10 years and fines.

CUSTOMS CONSIDERATIONS: Indian customs authorities strictly enforce the laws and regulations governing the declaration, importation, or possession of gold and gold objects. Travelers have sometimes been detained for possession of undeclared gold objects.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING: Both India and Pakistan claim an area of the Karakoram mountain range that includes the Siachen Glacier. The two countries have military outposts in the region, and armed clashes have occurred. Because of this situation, U.S. citizens traveling to or climbing peaks anywhere in the disputed areas face significant risk of injury and death. The disputed area includes the following peaks: Rimo Peak; Apsarasas I, II and III; Tegam Kangri I, II and III; Suingri Kangri; Ghiant I and II; Indira Col; and Sia Kangri.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: Travel by road in India is dangerous. Outside major cities, main roads and highways are poorly maintained and always congested. Even main roads often have only two lanes, with poor visibility and inadequate warning markers. Heavy traffic, including overloaded trucks and buses, scooters, pedestrians, and livestock, is the norm. Travel at night is particularly hazardous. In March 1996, a tour bus crashed at night near the city of Agra, claiming the lives of five Americans.

The information below concerning traffic safety and road conditions in India is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Safety of Public Transportation: Poor
Urban Road Conditions/Maintenance: Poor
Rural Road Conditions/Maintenance: Poor
Availability of Roadside Assistance: Poor

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the Government of India's Civil Aviation Authority as Category 1 – in compliance with international aviation safety standards for oversight of India's air carrier operations. For further information, travelers may contact the Department of Transportation within the U.S. at 1-800-322-7873, or visit the FAA's Internet website at http://www.faa.gov/avr/iasa/index.htm. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) separately assesses some foreign air carriers for suitability as official providers of air services. For information regarding the DOD policy on specific carriers, travelers may contact the DOD at (618) 256-4801.

PILOTING CIVIL AIRCRAFT: In past years there have been a number of incidents in which civil aircraft have been detained for deviating from approved flight plans. U.S. citizens piloting civil aircraft in India must file any changes to previous flight plans with the appropriate Indian authorities and may not overfly restricted airspace.

Y2K INFORMATION: As a consequence of the so-called Y2K "bug," on or about January 1, 2000, some automated systems throughout the world may experience problems, including unpredictable system malfunctions. In countries that are not prepared, the Y2K problem could affect financial services, utilities, health services, telecommunications, energy, transportation and other vital services. American citizens who are traveling to any country during this time period should be aware of the potential for the disruption of normal medical services. Travelers with special medical needs should consult with their personal physician and take appropriate precautions. While travelers do not necessarily need to alter their travel plans, being informed and prepared for possible disruptions is prudent.

India is not heavily reliant on computerized systems. In November 1998, India established a national-level Y2K Action Force, with both government and industry association representation. Certain sectors such as banking and telecommunications have displayed an active awareness of the Y2K problem, in particular in cooperating with international agencies and organizations. The information technology industrial associations have taken an active role in promoting awareness of Y2K issues and problems.

Though Indian firms rank among the leading providers of Y2K remediation for other countries, some Indian sectors have been slow to recognize the extent of potential Y2K problems within the country, and the Y2K National Task Force has no legal power to enforce compliance. While the central government has ensured that sufficient financial resources are available for federal government organizations, sufficient resources for state and private sector institutions are less clear.

India appears to be generally prepared to deal with the Y2K problem, particularly in telecommunications, banking and finance. The largest question is the readiness of the electric power sector and the ocean ports, parts of which have been slow to address the Y2K issue. U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in India in late 1999 or early 2000 should be aware of potential difficulties.

It is difficult to predict the severity or duration of Y2K-related disruptions. U.S. citizens in India should take practical precautions, anticipate the potential for disruption to their daily activities, and be prepared to cope with the impact of such disruptions. Information about personal preparedness and Y2K is available in the Department of State Worldwide Public Announcement of July 26, 1999, which is accessible on the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at http://travel.state.gov/y2kca.html.

Aviation and Y2K: The U.S. Department of Transportation is heading an international year 2000 civil aviation evaluation process to review information on Y2K readiness in aviation based on reports to the International Civil Aviation Organization and other available sources. The Federal Aviation Administration is working with the industry and its international partners to encourage sharing of Y2K readiness and contingency planning information so that air carriers will be able to make appropriate decisions. Consult your airline about contingency plans in the event of unforeseen Y2K-related delays, cancellations, or disruptions. See the Department of Transportation Y2K home page at http://www.dot.gov/fly2k for updated information on Y2K and aviation issues.

As January 1, 2000, draws nearer, we will provide updated information available to us about important Y2K issues in India on the Consular Affairs home page at http://travel.state.gov/y2kca.html. In addition, monitor the home page of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India at http://www.usia.gov/posts/delhi.html for additional updates. See also the Government of India's Y2K information at http://www.doe.gov.in and http://www.doe.gov.in/~doe/y2k.htm.

EMBASSY LOCATION AND REGISTRATION: U.S. citizens are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi or at one of the U.S. consulates in India, and to obtain updated information on travel and security in India and Bhutan and request a copy of the booklet "Guidelines for American Travelers in India." The workweek is Monday through Friday.

--The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi is located at Shanti Path, Chanakyapuri 110021; telephone (91)(11) 419-8000. The Embassy's Internet home page address is http://www.usia.gov/posts/delhi.html.

--The U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai (Bombay) is located at Lincoln House, 78 Bhulabhai Desai Road, 400026, telephone (91)(22) 363-3611. Internet home page address is http://www.usia.gov/posts/mumbai.

--The U.S. Consulate General in Calcutta is at 5/1 Ho Chi Minh Sarani, 700071; telephone (91)(033) 282-3611 through 282-3615. Internet home page address is http://www.usia.gov/posts/calcutta.

--The U.S. Consulate General in Chennai (Madras) is at Mount Road, 600006, telephone (91)(44) 827-3040. The Internet home page address is http://www.usia.gov/posts/chennai.

This replaces the Consular Information Sheet for India dated April 27, 1999, to expand information on Y2K and to note the new telephone number of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi.

U.S. Department of State, March 2000
Bureau of South Asian Affairs

Background Notes: India

People
History
Government
Political Conditions
Economy
Foreign Relations
Defense
U.S. Relations
Travel/Business
Geographic Learning Site
Home Page

Official Name:
Republic of India

PROFILE

Geography

Area: 3.3 million sq. km. (1.3 million sq. mi.); about one-third the size of the U.S.
Cities: *Capital*--New Delhi (pop. 11 million). *Other major cities*--Mumbai, formerly Bombay (15 million); Calcutta (12 million); Chennai, formerly Madras (6 million); Bangalore (5 million); Hyderabad (5 million); Ahmedabad (3.7 million).
Terrain: Varies from Himalayas to flat river valleys.
Climate: Temperate to subtropical monsoon.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Indian(s).
Population (1999 est.): one billion; urban 32%.
Annual growth rate: 1.8%.
Density: 311/sq. km.
Ethnic groups: Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid 2%, others. Religions: Hindu 81.3%, Muslim 12%, Christian 2.3%, Sikh 1.9%, other groups including Buddhist, Jain, Parsi 2.5%.
Languages: Hindi, English, and 16 other official languages.
Education: *Years compulsory*--9 (to age 14). *Literacy*--54%.
Health: *Infant mortality rate*--71/1,000. *Life expectancy*--63 years.
Work force (est.): 416 million. *Agriculture*--63%; *industry and commerce*--22%; *services and government*--11%; *transport and communications*--4%.

Government

Type: Federal republic.
Independence: August 15, 1947.
Constitution: January 26, 1950.
Branches: *Executive*--president (chief of state), prime minister (head of government), Council of Ministers (cabinet). *Legislative*--bicameral parliament (Rajya Sabha or Council of States and Lok Sabha or House of the People). *Judicial*--Supreme Court.
Political parties: Bharatiya Janata Party, Congress (I), Janata Dal (United), Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India-Marxist, and numerous regional and small national parties.

Political subdivisions: 25 states,* 7 union territories.
Suffrage: Universal over 18.

Economy

GDP: $390 billion.
Real growth rate (1998-99): 6.8%.
Per capita GDP: $420.
Natural resources: Coal, iron ore, manganese, mica, bauxite, chromite, thorium, limestone, barite, titanium ore, diamonds, crude oil.
Agriculture (25% of GDP): *Products*--wheat, rice, coarse grains, oilseeds, sugar, cotton, jute, tea.
Industry (29% of GDP): *Products*--textiles, jute, processed food, steel, machinery, transport equipment, cement, aluminum, fertilizers, mining, petroleum, chemicals, computer software.
Trade: *Exports*--$34 billion: agricultural products, engineering goods, precious stones, cotton apparel and fabrics, handicrafts, tea.
Imports--$42 billion: petroleum, machinery and transport equipment, edible oils, fertilizer, jewelry, iron and steel. *Major trade partners*--U.S., EU, Russia, Japan, Iraq, Iran, central and eastern Europe.

PEOPLE

Although India occupies only 2.4% of the world's land area, it supports over 15% of the world's population. Only China has a larger population. Almost 40% of Indians are younger than 15 years of age. About 70% of the people live in more than 550,000 villages, and the remainder in more than 200 towns and cities. Over thousands of years of its history, India has been invaded from the Iranian plateau, Central Asia, Arabia, Afghanistan, and the West; Indian people and culture have absorbed and changed these influences to produce a remarkable racial and cultural synthesis.

Religion, caste, and language are major determinants of social and political organization in India today. The government has recognized 18 languages as official; Hindi is the most widely spoken.

Although 83% of the people are Hindu, India also is the home of more than 120 million Muslims--one of the world's largest Muslim populations. The population also includes Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and Parsis.

The caste system reflects Indian occupational and religiously defined hierarchies. Traditionally, there are four broad categories of castes (varnas), including a category of outcastes, earlier called "untouchables" but now commonly referred to as "dalits." Within these broad categories there are thousands of castes and subcastes , whose relative status varies from region to region. Despite economic modernization and laws countering discrimination against the lower end of the class structure, the caste system remains an important source of social identification for most Hindus and a potent factor in the political life of the country.

HISTORY

The people of India have had a continuous civilization since 2500 B.C., when the inhabitants of the Indus River valley developed an urban culture based on commerce and sustained by agricultural trade. This civilization declined around 1500 B.C., probably due to ecological changes.

During the second millennium B.C., pastoral, Aryan-speaking tribes migrated from the northwest into the subcontinent. As they settled in the middle Ganges River valley, they adapted to antecedent cultures.

The political map of ancient and medieval India was made up of myriad kingdoms with fluctuating boundaries. In the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., northern India was unified under the Gupta Dynasty. During this period, known as India's Golden Age, Hindu culture and political administration reached new heights.

Islam spread across the subcontinent over a period of 500 years. In the 10th and 11th centuries, Turks and Afghans invaded India and established sultanates in Delhi. In the early 16th century, descendants of Genghis Khan swept across the Khyber Pass and established the Mughal (Mogul) Dynasty, which lasted for 200 years. From the 11th to the 15th centuries, southern India was dominated by Hindu Chola and Vijayanagar Dynasties. During this time, the two systems--the prevailing Hindu and Muslim--mingled, leaving lasting cultural influences on each other.

The first British outpost in South Asia was established in 1619 at Surat on the northwestern coast. Later in the century, the East India Company opened permanent trading stations at Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta, each under the protection of native rulers.

The British expanded their influence from these footholds until, by the 1850s, they controlled most of present-day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In 1857, a rebellion in north India led by mutinous Indian soldiers caused the British Parliament to transfer all political power from the East India Company to the Crown. Great Britain began administering most of India directly while controlling the rest through treaties with local rulers.

In the late 1800s, the first steps were taken toward self-government in British India with the appointment of Indian councilors to advise the British viceroy and the establishment of provincial councils with Indian members; the British subsequently widened participation in legislative councils. Beginning in 1920, Indian leader Mohandas K. Gandhi transformed the Indian National Congress political party into a mass movement to campaign against British colonial rule. The party used both parliamentary and nonviolent resistance and noncooperation to achieve independence.

On August 15, 1947, India became a dominion within the Commonwealth, with Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister. Enmity between Hindus and Muslims led the British to partition British India, creating East and West Pakistan, where there were Muslim majorities. India became a republic within the Commonwealth after promulgating its constitution on January 26, 1950.

After independence, the Congress Party, the party of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, ruled India under the influence first of Nehru and then his daughter and grandson, with the exception of two brief periods in the 1970s and 1980s.

Prime Minister Nehru governed the nation until his death in 1964. He was succeeded by Lal Bahadur Shastri, who also died in office. In 1966, power passed to Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister from 1966 to 1977. In 1975, beset with deepening political and economic problems, Mrs. Gandhi declared a state of emergency and suspended many civil liberties. Seeking a mandate at the polls for her policies, she called for elections in 1977, only to be defeated by Moraji Desai, who headed the Janata Party, an amalgam of five opposition parties.

In 1979, Desai's Government crumbled. Charan Singh formed an interim government, which was followed by Mrs. Gandhi's return to power in January 1980. On October 31, 1984, Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated, and her son, Rajiv, was chosen by the Congress (I)--for "Indira"--Party to take her place. His government was brought down in 1989 by allegations of corruption and was followed by V.P. Singh and then Chandra Shekhar.

In the 1989 elections, although Rajiv Gandhi and Congress won more seats in the 1989 elections than any other single party, he was unable to form a government with a clear majority. The Janata Dal, a union of opposition parties, was able to form a government with the help of the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on the right and the communists on the left. This loose coalition collapsed in November 1990, and the government was controlled for a short period by a breakaway Janata Dal group supported by Congress (I), with Chandra Shekhar as Prime Minister. That alliance also collapsed, resulting in national elections in June 1991.

On May 27, 1991, while campaigning in Tamil Nadu on behalf of Congress (I), Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated, apparently by Tamil extremists from Sri Lanka. In the elections, Congress (I) won 213 parliamentary seats and put together a coalition, returning to power under the leadership of P.V. Narasimha Rao. This Congress-led government, which served a full 5-year term, initiated a gradual process of economic liberalization and reform, which has opened the Indian economy to global trade and investment. India's domestic politics also took new shape, as traditional alignments by caste, creed, and ethnicity gave way to a plethora of small, regionally based political parties.

The final months of the Rao-led government in the spring of 1996 were marred by several major political corruption scandals, which contributed to the worst electoral performance by the Congress Party in its history. The Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged from the May 1996 national elections as the single-largest party in the Lok Sabha but without enough strength to prove a majority on the floor of that Parliament. Under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the BJP coalition lasted in power 13 days. With all political parties wishing to avoid another round of elections, a 14-party coalition led by the Janata Dal emerged to form a government known as the United Front, under the former Chief Minister of Karnataka, H.D. Deve Gowda. His government lasted less than a year, as the leader of the Congress Party withdrew his support in March 1997. Inder Kumar Gujral replaced Deve Gowda as the consensus choice for Prime Minister of a 16-party United Front coalition.

In November 1997, the Congress Party again withdrew support for the United Front. New elections in February 1998 brought the BJP the largest number of seats in Parliament--182--but fell far short of a majority. On March 20, 1998, the President inaugurated a BJP-led coalition government with Vajpayee again serving as Prime Minister. On May 11 and 13, 1998, this government conducted a series of underground nuclear tests forcing U.S. President Clinton to impose economic sanctions on India pursuant to the 1994 Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act.

In April 1999, the BJP-led coalition government fell apart, leading to fresh elections in September. The National Democratic Alliance-a new coalition led by the BJP-gained a majority to form the government with Vajpayee as Prime Minister in October 1999.

GOVERNMENT

According to its constitution, India is a "sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic." Like the United States, India has a federal form of government. However, the central government in India has greater power in relation to its states, and its central government is patterned after the British parliamentary system.

The government exercises its broad administrative powers in the name of the president, whose duties are largely ceremonial. The president and vice president are elected indirectly for 5-year terms by a special electoral college. Their terms are staggered, and the vice president does not automatically become president following the death or removal from office of the president.

Real national executive power is centered in the Council of Ministers (cabinet), led by the prime minister. The president appoints the prime minister, who is designated by legislators of the political party or coalition commanding a parliamentary majority. The president then appoints subordinate ministers on the advice of the prime minister.

India's bicameral parliament consists of the Rajya Sabha (Council of States) and the Lok Sabha (House of the People). The Council of Ministers is responsible to the Lok Sabha.

The legislatures of the states and union territories elect 233 members to the Rajya Sabha, and the president appoints another 12. The elected members of the Rajya Sabha serve 6-year terms, with one-third up for election every 2 years. The Lok Sabha consists of 545 members; 543 are directly elected to 5-year terms. The other two are appointed.

India's independent judicial system began under the British, and its concepts and procedures resemble those of Anglo-Saxon countries. The Supreme Court consists of a chief justice and 25 other justices, all appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister.

India has 25 states* and 7 union territories. At the state level, some of the legislatures are bicameral, patterned after the two houses of the national parliament. The states' chief ministers are responsible to the legislatures in the same way the prime minister is responsible to parliament.

Each state also has a presidentially appointed governor who may assume certain broad powers when directed by the central government. The central government exerts greater control over the union territories than over the states, although some territories have gained more power to administer their own affairs. Local governments in India have less autonomy than their counterparts in the United States. Some states are trying to revitalize the traditional village councils, or panchayats, which aim to promote popular democratic participation at the village level, where much of the population still lives.

Principal Government Officials

President--Kocheril Raman Narayanan
Vice President--Krishan Kant
Prime Minister--Atal Bihari Vajpayee
Minister of External Affairs-Jaswant Singh
Minister of State (External Affairs)-Ajit Kumar Panja
Ambassador to the U.S.--Naresh Chandra
Ambassador to the UN--Kamalesh Sharma

India maintains an embassy in the United States at 2107 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008 (tel. 202-939-7000, fax 202-265-4351, email indembwash@indiagov.org) and consulates general in New York, Chicago, Houston, and San Francisco.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee took office in October 1999 after a general election in which a BJP-led coalition of 13 parties called the National Democratic Alliance emerged with an absolute majority. The coalition reflects the ongoing transition in Indian politics away from the historically dominant and national-based Congress Party toward smaller, narrower-based regional parties. This process has been underway throughout much of the past decade and is likely to continue in the future.

The Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as the single-largest party in the Lok Sabha (lower house of Parliament) elections in September 1999. The BJP currently leads a coalition government under Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee. Party President Kushabhau Thakre was elected by the Party National Executive in April 1998. The Hindu-nationalist BJP draws its political strength mainly from the "Hindi belt" in the northern and western regions of India. The party holds power in the states of Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh (in coalition with several small parties), Himachal Pradesh (in coalition with Himachal Vikas Congress) Punjab (in coalition with Akali Dal) and in Haryana (in coalition with the Indian National Lok Dal). Popularly viewed as the party of the upper caste and trading communities, the BJP has made strong inroads into the lower caste vote bank in recent national and state assembly elections.

The Congress (I) Party, led by Sonia Gandhi (widow of the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi), holds the second-largest number of seats in the Lok Sabha. Priding itself as a secular, centrist party, the Congress has been the historically dominant political party in India. Its performance in national elections has steadily declined during the last decade. The Congress still rules in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra (in coalition with the National Congress Party), Karnataka, and three of the smaller states in the northeast. The political fortunes of the Congress have suffered badly as major groups in its traditional vote bank have been lost to emerging regional and caste-based parties, such as the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party.

The Janata Dal (United) Party claims to be a national party but currently holds significant strength only in Karnataka and Bihar. It advocates a secular and socialist ideology and draws much of its popular support from Muslims, lower castes, and tribals.

ECONOMY

India's population continues to grow at about 1.8% per year and is estimated at one billion. While its GDP is low in dollar terms, India has the world's 13th-largest GNP. About 62% of the population depends directly on agriculture.

Industry and services sectors are growing in importance and account for 26% and 48% of GDP, respectively, while agriculture contributes about 25.6% of GDP. More than 35% of the population live below the poverty line, but a large and growing middle class of 150-200 million has disposable income for consumer goods.

India embarked on a series of economic reforms in 1991 in reaction to a severe foreign exchange crisis. Those reforms have included liberalized foreign investment and exchange regimes, significant reductions in tariffs and other trade barriers, reform and modernization of the financial sector, and significant adjustments in government monetary and fiscal policies.

The reform process has had some very beneficial effects on the Indian economy, including higher growth rates, lower inflation, and significant increases in foreign investment. Real GDP growth was 6.8% in 1998-99, up from 5% in the 1997-98 fiscal year. Growth in 1999-2000 is expected to be around 6%. Foreign portfolio and direct investment flows have risen significantly since reforms began in 1991 and have contributed to healthy foreign currency reserves ($32 billion in February 2000) and a moderate current account deficit of about 1% (1998-99). India's economic growth is constrained, however, by inadequate infrastructure, cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, and high real interest rates. India will have to address these constraints in formulating its economic policies and by pursuing the second generation reforms to maintain recent trends in economic growth.

India's trade has increased significantly since reforms began in 1991, largely as a result of staged tariff reductions and elimination of nontariff barriers. The outlook for further trade liberalization is mixed. India has agreed to eliminate quantitative restrictions on imports of about 1,420 consumer goods by April 2001 to meet its WTO commitments. On the other hand, the government has imposed "additional" import duties of 5% on most products plus a surcharge of 10% over the past 2 years. The U.S. is India's largest trading partner; bilateral trade in 1998-99 was about $10.9 billion. Principal U.S. exports to India are aircraft and parts, advanced machinery, fertilizers, ferrous waste and scrap metal, and computer hardware. Major U.S. imports from India include textiles and ready-made garments, agricultural and related products, gems and jewelry, leather products, and chemicals.

Significant liberalization of its investment regime since 1991 has made India an attractive place for foreign direct and portfolio investment. The U.S. is India's largest investment partner, with total inflow of U.S. direct investment estimated at $2 billion (market value) in 1999. U.S. investors also have provided an estimated 11% of the $18 billion of foreign portfolio investment that has entered India since 1992. Proposals for direct foreign investment are considered by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board and generally receive government approval. Automatic approvals are available for investments involving up to 100% foreign equity, depending on the kind of industry. Foreign investment is particularly sought after in power generation, telecommunications, ports, roads, petroleum exploration and processing, and mining.

India's external debt was up to $98 billion in March 1999, compared to $94 billion in March 1998. The country's debt service ratio has fallen to about 20%. Bilateral assistance has been about $1 billion annually in recent years, with the U.S. providing about $150 million in development assistance in Fiscal Year 1999. The World Bank had approved loans worth about $1.05 billion for India in 1999.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

India's size, population, and strategic location give it a prominent voice in international affairs, and its growing industrial base, military strength, and scientific and technical capacity give it added weight. It collaborates closely with other developing countries on issues from trade to environmental protection. The end of the Cold War dramatically affected Indian foreign policy. India remains a leader of the developing world and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and hosted the NAM Heads of State Summit in 1997. India is now also seeking to strengthen its political and commercial ties with the United States, Japan, the European Union, Iran, China, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. India is an active member of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IORARC).

India has always been an active member of the United Nations and now seeks a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. India has a long tradition of participating in UN peacekeeping operations and most recently contributed personnel to UN operations in Somalia, Cambodia, Mozambique, Kuwait, Bosnia, Angola, and El Salvador.

Bilateral and Regional Relations

Pakistan. India's relations with Pakistan are influenced by the centuries-old rivalry between Hindus and Muslims which led to partition of British India in 1947. The principal source of contention has been Kashmir, whose Hindu Maharaja chose in 1947 to join India, although a majority of his subjects were Muslim. India maintains that his decision and the subsequent elections in Kashmir have made it an integral part of India. Pakistan asserts Kashmiris' rights to self-determination through a plebiscite in accordance with an earlier Indian pledge and a UN resolution. This dispute triggered wars between the two countries in 1947 and 1965.

In December 1971, following a political crisis in what was then East Pakistan and the flight of millions of Bengali refugees to India, Pakistan and India again went to war. The brief conflict left the situation largely unchanged in the west, where the two armies reached an impasse, but a decisive Indian victory in the east resulted in the creation of Bangladesh.

Since the 1971 war, Pakistan and India have made only slow progress toward normalization of relations. In July 1972, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto met in the Indian hill station of Simla. They signed an agreement by which India would return all personnel and captured territory in the west and the two countries would "settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations." Diplomatic and trade relations were re-established in 1976.

After the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, new strains appeared in India-Pakistan relations; Pakistan supported the Afghan resistance, while India implicitly supported Soviet occupation. In the following eight years, India voiced increasing concern over Pakistani arms purchases, U.S. military aid to Pakistan, and Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. In an effort to curtail tensions, the two countries formed a joint commission. In December 1988, Prime Ministers Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto concluded a pact not to attack each other's nuclear facilities. Agreements on cultural exchanges and civil aviation also were initiated.

In 1997, high-level Indo-Pakistani talks resumed after a 3-year pause. The Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan met twice and the foreign secretaries conducted three rounds of talks. In June 1997, the foreign secretaries identified eight "outstanding issues" around which continuing talks would be focused. The dispute over the status of Jammu and Kashmir, an issue since partition, remains the major stumbling block in their dialogue. India maintains that the entire former princely state is an integral part of the Indian union, while Pakistan insists that UN resolutions calling for self-determination of the people of the state must be taken into account.

In September 1997, the talks broke down over the structure of how to deal with the issues of Kashmir and peace and security. Pakistan advocated that the issues be treated by separate working groups. India responded that the two issues be taken up along with six others on a simultaneous basis. In May 1998 India, and then Pakistan, conducted nuclear tests. Attempts to restart dialogue between the two nations were given a major boost by the February 1999 meeting of both Prime Ministers in Lahore and their signing of three agreements. These efforts have since been stalled by the intrusion of Pakistani-backed forces into Indian-held territory near Kargil in May 1999, and by the military coup in Pakistan that overturned the Nawaz Sharif government in October the same year.

SAARC. Certain aspects of India's relations within the subcontinent are conducted through the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Its members are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Established in 1985, SAARC encourages cooperation in agriculture, rural development, science and technology, culture, health, population control, narcotics, and terrorism.

SAARC has intentionally stressed these "core issues" and avoided more divisive political issues, although political dialogue is often conducted on the margins of SAARC meetings. In 1993, India and its SAARC partners signed an agreement gradually to lower tariffs within the region. Forward movement in SAARC has come to a standstill because of the tension between India and Pakistan, and the SAARC Summit originally scheduled for, but not held in, November 1999 has not been rescheduled.

China. Despite suspicions remaining from the 1962 border conflict between India and China and continuing territorial/boundary disputes, Sino-Indian relations have improved gradually since 1988. Both countries have sought to reduce tensions along the frontier, expand trade and cultural ties, and normalize relations.

A series of high-level visits between the two nations has helped to improve relations. In December 1996, Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited India on a tour of South Asia. While in New Delhi, he signed, with the Indian Prime Minister, a series of confidence-building measures along the disputed border, including troop reductions and weapons limitations.

Sino-Indian relations received a setback in May 1998 when India justified its nuclear tests by citing potential threats from China. These accusations followed criticism of Chinese "aggressive actions" in Pakistan and Burma by Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes. However, in June 1999, during the Kargil crisis, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh visited Beijing and stated that India did not consider China a threat. Relations between India and China are on the mend, and the two sides handled the move from Tibet to India of the Karmapa Lama in January 2000 with delicacy and tact.

New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) had major repercussions for Indian foreign policy. Substantial trade with the former Soviet Union plummeted after the Soviet collapse and has yet to recover. Longstanding military supply relationships were similarly disrupted due to questions over financing, although Russia continues to be India's largest supplier of military systems and spare parts.

Russia and India have decided not to renew the 1971 Indo-Soviet Peace and Friendship Treaty and have sought to follow what both describe as a more pragmatic, less ideological relationship. Russian President Yeltsin's visit to India in January 1993 helped cement this new relationship. The pace of high-level visits has since increased, as has discussion of major defense purchases.

DEFENSE

Supreme command of India's armed forces--the third-largest in the world-- rests with the president, but actual responsibility for national defense lies with the cabinet committee for political affairs under the chairmanship of the prime minister. The minister of defense is responsible to parliament for all defense matters. India's military command structure has no joint defense staff or unified command apparatus. The ministry of defense provides administrative and operational control over the three services through their respective chiefs of staff. The armed forces have always been loyal to constitutional authority and maintain a tradition of non-involvement in political affairs.

The army numbers about 1.1 million personnel and fields 34 divisions. Designed primarily to defend the country's frontiers, the army has become heavily committed to internal security duties in Kashmir and the Northeast.

The navy is much smaller, but it is relatively well-armed among Indian Ocean navies, operating one aircraft carrier, 41 surface combatants, and 18 submarines. The fleet is aging, and replacement of ships and aircraft has not been adequately funded. India's coast guard is small and is organized along the lines of the U.S. Coast Guard. With India's long coastline and extensive Exclusive Economic Zone, the navy and coast guard work hard to patrol the waters dictated by India's economic and strategic interests.

The air force, the world's fourth largest, has over 600 combat aircraft and more than 500 transports and helicopters. The air force takes pride in its ability to fly low and fast, as well as to operate in the extremes of temperature and altitude ranging from the Thar Desert to the Siachen Glacier. The air force has enhanced the capability of its fighter force with the addition of the multi-role Sukhoi 30, and it hopes to replace much of its Mig-21 fleet with the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft currently under development.

U.S.-INDIA RELATIONS

India's nuclear tests in May 1998 seriously damaged Indo-American relations. President Clinton imposed wideranging sanctions pursuant to the 1994 Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act. The United States encouraged India to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) immediately and without condition. The U.S. also called for restraint in missile and nuclear testing and deployment in both India and Pakistan. The nonproliferation dialogue initiated after the 1998 nuclear tests has bridged many of the gaps in understanding between the countries. However, India has yet to sign the CTBT, agree to a fissile material production moratorium, or define its intentions on acquiring a nuclear deterrent clearly. U.S. sanctions on Indian entities involved in the nuclear industry and opposition to international financial institution loans for non-humanitarian assistance projects in India remain sources of friction.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador--Richard F. Celeste
Deputy Chief of Mission--E. Ashley Wills
Public Affairs--Francis B. Ward
Political Affairs-Robert K. Boggs
Economic and Scientific Affairs--Alice A. Dress
Commercial Affairs--Carol M. Kim

Agricultural Affairs--Waylon M. Beeghly
Administrative Affairs--Peter W. Bodde
Consular Affairs-John R. Nay
USAID Mission, Director--Linda E. Morse

Consuls General Mumbai (formerly Bombay)--David P. Good
Calcutta--Chris J. Sandrolini
Chennai (formerly Madras)--Bernard J. Alter

The U.S. embassy in India is located on Shantipath, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi 110021 (tel. 91-11-419-8000) (fax: 91-11-4190017). Embassy and consulate working hours are Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Visa application hours are Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

*This number includes the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The United States considers all of the former princely state of Kashmir to be disputed territory. India, Pakistan, and China each control parts of Kashmir.

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program provides Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, and Public Announcements. **Consular Information Sheets** exist for all countries and include information on entry requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, areas of instability, crime and security, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. posts in the country. **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. **Public Announcements** are issued as a means to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas which pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. Free copies of this information are available by calling the Bureau of Consular Affairs at 202-647-5225 or via the fax-on-demand system: 202-647-3000. Consular Information Sheets and Travel Warnings also are available on the Consular Affairs Internet home page: http://travel.state.gov. Consular Affairs Tips for Travelers publication series, which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad are on the internet and hard copies can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, telephone: 202-512-1800; fax 202-512-2250.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained from the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at (202) 647-5225. For after-hours emergencies, Sundays and holidays, call 202-647-4000.

Passport information can be obtained by calling the National Passport Information Center's automated system ($.35 per minute) or live operators 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (EST) Monday-Friday ($1.05 per minute). The number is 1-900-225-5674 (TDD: 1-900-225-7778). Major credit card users (for a flat rate of $4.95) may call 1-

888-362-8668 (TDD: 1-888-498-3648). It also is available on the internet.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) and a web site at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. A booklet entitled Health Information for International Travel (HHS publication number CDC-95-8280) is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, tel. (202) 512-1800.

Information on travel conditions, visa requirements, currency and customs regulations, legal holidays, and other items of interest to travelers also may be obtained before your departure from a country's embassy and/or consulates in the U.S. (for this country, see "Principal Government Officials" listing in this publication).

U.S. citizens who are long-term visitors or traveling in dangerous areas are encouraged to register at the U.S. embassy upon arrival in a country (see "Principal U.S. Embassy Officials" listing in this publication). This may help family members contact you in case of an emergency.

Further Electronic Information

Department of State Foreign Affairs Network. Available on the Internet, DOSFAN provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information. Updated daily, DOSFAN includes Background Notes; daily press briefings; Country Commercial Guides; directories of key officers of foreign service posts; etc. DOSFAN's World Wide Web site is at http://www.state.gov.

National Trade Data Bank (NTDB). Operated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the NTDB contains a wealth of trade-related information. It is available on the Internet (www.stat-usa.gov) and on CD-ROM. Call the NTDB Help-Line at (202) 482-1986 for more information.

[end document]

Richard F. Celeste
U.S. Ambassador to India

Ambassador Richard F. Celeste presented his credentials to President of India Mr. K.R. Narayanan on November 28, 1997.

Ambassador Richard F. Celeste was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1937. After graduating Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Yale University in 1959, Ambassador Celeste attended Exeter University and Oxford University in England as a Rhodes Scholar.

After a short term as a Staff Liaison Officer in the Peace Corps, Ambassador Celeste worked for four years as Special Assistant to the American Ambassador to India in New Delhi. Following this, Ambassador Celeste returned to his native Ohio where he served as a State Representative for four years and Lt. Governor for a further four years.

Ambassador Celeste then went to Washington where he served as Director of the Peace Corps for two years before returning to Ohio to run for Governor. In 1982 Ambassador Celeste was elected Governor of Ohio.

Following two terms as Governor, from 1983 to 1991, Ambassador Celeste became a Managing Partner in the consulting firm, Celeste & Sabety, Ltd., located in Columbus, Ohio.

Ambassador Celeste is currently Chairman of the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable, Chairman of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science Advisory Board, a member of the Secretary of Energy's Advisory Board, a council member of Appropriate Technology International, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and a Visiting Fellow in Public Policy at Case Western Reserve University.

Ambassador Celeste is married to Jacqueline Lundquist. The couple has one child.

Key U.S. Officials in New Delhi

Deputy Chief of Mission
E. Ashley Wills

Political Affairs
Robert K. Boggs

Consular Affairs
John R. Nay

Administrative Affairs
Peter W. Bodde

Regional Security Affairs
Gerard J. Lopez

Public Affairs
Francis B. Ward

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Divider Title: **BANGLADESH**

Base 802490 (544488) 5-96

Bangladeshi Taka at 51.0 = U.S. $

Taka to U.S. Dollars		U.S. Dollars to Taka	
Taka	**U.S. $**	**U.S. $**	**Taka**
0.50	0.01	0.10	5.10
1.00	0.02	0.25	12.75
10.00	0.20	0.50	25.50
25.00	0.49	0.75	38.25
51.00	1.00	1.00	51.00
60.00	1.18	2.50	127.50
75.00	1.47	5.00	255.00
100.00	1.96	10.00	510.00
125.00	2.45	20.00	1,020.00
150.00	2.94	50.00	2,550.00
200.00	3.92	100.00	5,100.00
500.00	9.80	125.00	6,375.00
1,000.00	19.61	350.00	17,850.00

NOTE: All U.S. dollar values are rounded to the nearest U.S. cent. The value of the Bangladeshi Taka fluctuates daily according to currency market conditions.

March 2000

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Washington, DC 20520
For recorded travel information, call 202-647-5225
Internet Address: http://travel.state.gov
For information by fax, call 202-647-3000 from your fax machine

Consular Information Sheet

Bangladesh

September 14, 1999

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Bangladesh has a developing economy. Tourist facilities outside major cities and tourist areas are minimal.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: A passport and onward/return ticket are required. A visa is not required for a tourist stay of up to 15 days. Visas (landing permits) are available for a fee upon arrival by air. Further information on entry requirements can be obtained from the Embassy of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, 2201 Wisconsin Avenue N.W. Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20007, telephone 202-342-8373, Internet: http://members.aol.com/banglaemb/main.htm or from the Bangladesh consulates in New York, 211 E. 43rd Street, Suite 502, New York, NY 10017, telephone 212-599-6767, or Los Angeles, 10850 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1250, Los Angeles, CA 90024, telephone 310-441-9399.

SAFETY/SECURITY/AREAS OF INSTABILITY: Public demonstrations, marches and labor strikes are widely used means of political expression in Bangladesh. A number of general strikes, or "hartals," have been called by the political opposition over the past several years, resulting in the virtual shutdown of transportation and commerce, and attacks on individuals who do not observe the "hartals." Clashes between rival political groups have resulted in deaths and injuries to participants. Violence is a particular problem on university campuses. Visitors to Bangladesh should check with the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka for updated information on planned political activities.

CRIME INFORMATION: Crime rates in Bangladesh have traditionally been low compared to those in other areas of the world. However, crime in Dhaka and Chittigong is increasing, as are reports of crimes involving weapons. Foreigners have not been especially targeted. The loss or theft of a U.S. passport abroad should be reported immediately to local police and to the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka. U.S. citizens can refer to the Department of State's pamphlets "A Safe Trip Abroad" and "Tips for Travelers to South Asia" to promote a more trouble-free journey. The pamphlets are available by mail from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, via the Internet at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su docs, or via the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at http://travel.state.gov.

MEDICAL FACILITIES: Medical facilities in Bangladesh do not approach U.S. standards, even in tourist areas. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services. The Medicare/Medicaid program does not provide for payment of medical services outside the United States. U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. Travelers have found that, in some cases, supplemental medical insurance with specific overseas coverage, including provision for medical evacuation has proven useful.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas may face extreme difficulties. Check with your own insurance company to confirm whether your policy applies overseas, including provision for medical evacuation. Ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas hospital or doctor or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses you incur. Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death. Useful information on medical emergencies abroad, including overseas insurance programs, is provided in the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs brochure "Medical Information for Americans traveling Abroad," available via the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page or autofax: 202-647-3000.

OTHER HEALTH INFORMATION: Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's international traveler's hotline at telephone: 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax: 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or via their Internet site at http://www.cdc.gov.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. The information below concerning Bangladesh is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Safety of Public Transportation: poor
Urban Road Conditions/Maintenance: poor
Rural Road Conditions/Maintenance: poor
Availability of Roadside Assistance: poor

The Bangladesh road network is in generally poor condition, in part due to the difficulty of building and maintaining a transportation infrastructure across a vast river delta. The streets of Dhaka are congested, with hundreds of thousands of bicycle rickshaws competing with three-wheeled taxis, cars and trucks for limited road space. Because intercity roads are narrow and in poor condition, driving outside urban areas at night may be dangerous.

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the Government of Bangladesh's Civil Aviation Authority as Category 2--not in compliance with international aviation safety standards for oversight of Bangladesh's air carrier operations. While consultations to correct the deficiencies are ongoing, Bangladesh's air carriers are permitted to conduct limited operations to the U.S. subject to heightened FAA surveillance. For further information, travelers may contact the Department of Transportation within the U.S. at 1-800-322-7873, or visit the FAA's Internet website at http://faa.gov/avr/iasa/index.htm. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) does not permit its personnel to use air carriers from Category 2 countries for official business except for flights originating from or terminating in the U.S. For information regarding the DOD policy on specific carriers, travelers may contact the DOD at: (618) 256-4801.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS: There are restrictions on importing currency and weapons. Contact the Embassy of Bangladesh for specific information.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to the country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating Bangladesh's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession of, use of, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Bangladesh are strict. The death penalty or life imprisonment can be imposed for some drug-related crimes. At a minimum, convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and fines.

Y2K INFORMATION: As a consequence of the so called Y2K "bug", on or about January 1, 2000, some automated systems throughout the world may experience problems, including unpredictable system malfunctions. In countries that are not prepared, the Y2K problem could affect financial services, utilities, health services, telecommunications, energy, transportation and other vital services. American citizens who are traveling to any country during this time period should be aware of the potential for the disruption of normal medical services. Travelers with special medical needs should consult with their personal physician and take appropriate precautions. While travelers do not necessarily need to alter their travel plans, being informed and prepared for possible disruptions is prudent.

Although Bangladesh is not highly dependent upon computers and other systems with computer chips, certain key sectors of the economy could be affected by the Y2K bug. At this point, power generation would seem to be the most vulnerable to Y2K-related disruptions. The U.S. Embassy in Dhaka is continuing to urge government of Bangladesh authorities to take necessary actions in a timely way to minimize power disruptions. The Embassy will monitor closely government of Bangladesh progress in taking such actions. Other sectors of the economy, such as civil aviation, telecommunications, and water distribution are taking needed steps to prepare for Y2K.

U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in Bangladesh in late 1999 or early 2000 should be aware of potential difficulties.

It is difficult to predict the severity or duration of Y2K related disruptions. Any U.S. citizens in Bangladesh should take practical precautions, anticipate the potential for disruption to their daily activities, and be prepared to cope with the impact of such disruptions. Information about personal preparedness and Y2K is available in the Department of State Worldwide Public Announcement of July 26, 1999 which is accessible on the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at http://travel.state.gov/y2kca.html.

Aviation and Y2K: The Department of Transportation is heading an international Year 2000 civil aviation evaluation process to review information on Y2K readiness in aviation based on reports to the International Civil Aviation Organization and other available sources. The Federal Aviation Administration is working with the industry and its international partners to encourage sharing of Y2K readiness and contingency planning information so that air carriers will be able to make appropriate decisions. Consult your airline about contingency plans in the event of unforeseen Y2K-related delays, cancellations, or disruptions. See the Department of Transportation Y2K home page at http://www.dot.gov/fly2k for updated information on Y2K and aviation issues.

As January 1, 2000 draws nearer, we will provide updated information available to us about important Y2K issues in Bangladesh on the Consular Affairs home page at http://travel.state.gov/y2kca.html. In addition, monitor the home page of the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka at http://www.citechco.net/usdhaka or the Bangladesh Computer Council's website at Http://www.bccbd.org/y2k-bcc.htm for additional updates.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES: For information on international adoption of children, international parental child abduction, and international child support enforcement issues, please refer to our Internet site at http//travel.state.gov/childrens-issues.html or telephone 202-736-7000.

REGISTRATION/EMBASSY LOCATION: Americans living in or visiting Bangladesh are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka and obtain updated information on travel and security within Bangladesh. The U.S. Embassy is located at Diplomatic Enclave, Madani Avenue, Baridhara, Dhaka, telephone (880-2) 884700-22. Their Internet home page is http:// www.citechco.net/usdhaka.

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This replaces the Consular Information Sheet dated January 28, 1999, to update information on traffic safety and road condition, and to include information on medical insurance, the potential of difficulties of Y2K problems, aviation safety oversight, and children's issues.

U.S. Department of State, March 2000
Bureau of South Asian Affairs

Background Notes: Bangladesh

U.S. Relations
History
Economy
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Defense
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Foreign Relations
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Home Page

Official Name:
People's Republic of Bangladesh

PROFILE

Geography

Area: 143,998 sq. km. (55,813 sq. mi.); about the size of Wisconsin.
Cities: *Capital*--Dhaka (pop. 10 million). *Other cities*--Chittagong (2.8 million), Khulna (1.8 million), Rajshahi (1 million).
Terrain: Mainly flat alluvial plain, with hills in the northeast and southeast.
Climate: Semitropical, monsoonal.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Bangladeshi(s).
Population: Approximately 128 million.
Annual growth rate: 1.6%.
Ethnic groups: Bengali 98%, tribal groups, non-Bengali Muslims.
Religions: Muslim 88%; Hindu 11%; Christian, Buddhist, others 1%.
Languages: Bangla (official, also known as Bengali), English.
Education: Attendance--75.1% (primary school), 21.6% (secondary school). *Literacy*--50% for males; 27% for females, a total of 38.9% literacy.
Health: *Infant mortality rate*--81/1,000. *Life expectancy*--58 years (male), 58 years (female).
Work force (54.6 million): *Agriculture*--63%; *industry*--12%; *services*--25%.

Government

Type: Parliamentary democracy.
Independence: 1971, from Pakistan.
Constitution: 1972; amended 1974, 1979, 1986, 1988, 1991, 1996.
Branches: *Executive*--president (chief of state), prime minister (head of government), cabinet.
Legislative--unicameral Parliament (330 members).
Judicial--civil court system based on British model.
Administrative subdivisions: Divisions, districts, subdistricts, unions, villages.
Political parties: 30-40 active political parties.

Suffrage: Universal at age 18.

Economy

Annual GDP growth rate (1998-99): 4.2%.
Per capita GDP (2000 projected): $354.
Natural resources: Natural gas, fertile soil, water.
Agriculture (30% of GDP): Products--rice, jute, tea, sugar, wheat. *Land*--cultivable area cropped at rate of 176% in 1997; largely subsistence farming dependent on monsoonal rainfall, but growing commercial farming and increasing use of irrigation.
Industry (20% of GDP): *Types*--garments and knitwear, jute goods, frozen fish and seafood, textiles, fertilizer, sugar, tea, leather, shipbreaking for scrap, pharmaceuticals, ceramic tableware, newsprint.
Trade (1999): *Merchandise exports*--$5.4 billion: garments and knitwear, frozen fish, jute and jute goods, leather and leather products, tea, urea fertilizer, ceramic tableware. *Exports to U.S.* (1999)--$1.918. *Merchandise imports*--$8.6 billion: capital goods, foodgrains, petroleum, textiles, chemicals, vegetable oils. *Imports from U.S.* (1999)--$275 million.

U.S.-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

Although the U.S. relationship with Bangladesh was initially troubled because of strong U.S. ties with Pakistan, U.S.-Bangladesh friendship and support developed quickly following Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan in 1971.

U.S.-Bangladesh relations are excellent, as demonstrated by the visits to Washington, DC in August 1980 by President Zia; in 1983, 1988, and 1990 by President Ershad; 1992 by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia; and in 1996, 1997, and 1999 by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. In 1995, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton visited Bangladesh. U.S. policy has focused primarily on efforts to promote Bangladesh's economic development and the strength of its democratic institutions. The Government and people of Bangladesh are greatly looking forward to President Clinton's scheduled March 2000 visit to Bangladesh.

A centerpiece of the bilateral relationship is a large U.S. economic aid program, totaling about $153 million in 1999. U.S. economic and food aid programs, which began as emergency relief following the 1971 war for independence, now concentrate on long-term development. U.S. assistance objectives include stabilizing population growth, protecting human health, encouraging broad-based economic growth, and building democracy. In total, the United States has provided more than $4.2 billion in food and development assistance to Bangladesh. Food aid under Titles I, II, and III of PL-480 (congressional "food-for-peace" legislation) has been designed to help Bangladesh meet minimum food requirements, promote food production, and moderate fluctuation in consumer prices. Other U.S. development assistance emphasizes family planning and health, agricultural development, and rural employment. The

United States works with other donors, and the Bangladesh Government, to avoid duplication and ensure that resources are used to maximum benefit.

In the late 1990s U.S. companies brought a new dimension to the bilateral relationship, bringing total U.S. investment at the end of the 1990s to a stock of about $750 million from only $25 million in 1995. This new investment, which should reach at least $1.2 billion by the end of 2002, has been almost entirely in natural gas exploration/production and power generation, came in response to the Government of Bangladesh's policy of opening those sectors to foreign participants.

Since 1986, with the exception of 1988-89, when an aircraft purchase made the trade balance even, the U.S. trade balance with Bangladesh has been negative, due largely to growing imports of ready-made garments. Jute carpetbacking is the other major U.S. import from Bangladesh; total imports from Bangladesh were about $1.846 billion in 1998. U.S. exports to Bangladesh (some $318 million in 1998) include wheat, fertilizer, cotton, communications equipment, aircraft, and medical supplies, a portion of which is financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). A bilateral investment treaty was signed in 1989. Relations between Bangladesh and the United States were further strengthened by the participation of Bangladesh troops in the 1991 Gulf war coalition, and along side of U.S. forces in numerous UN Peacekeeping operations, as well as by the assistance of a U.S. Naval task force after a disastrous March 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh. The relief efforts of U.S. troops are credited with having saved as many as 200,000 lives. In response to Bangladesh's worst flooding of the century in 1998, the U.S. donated 700,000 metric tons of foodgrains, helping to mitigate shortages.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The area which is now Bangladesh has a rich historical and cultural past, combining Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, Mongol/Mughul, Arab, Persian, Turkic, and West European cultures. Residents of Bangladesh, about 98% of whom are ethnic Bengali and speak Bangla, are called Bangladeshis. Urdu-speaking, non-Bengali Muslims of Indian origin, and various tribal groups, mostly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, comprise the remainder. Most Bangladeshis (about 88%) are Muslims, but Hindus constitute a sizable (11%) minority. There also are a small number of Buddhists, Christians, and animists. English is spoken in urban areas and among the educated.

About 1200 AD, Muslim invaders, under Sufi influence, supplanted existing Hindu and Buddhist dynasties in Bengal. This incursion led to the conversion to Islam of most of the population in the eastern areas of Bengal, and created a sizable Muslim minority in the western areas of Bengal. Since then, Islam has played a crucial role in the region's history and politics.

Bengal was absorbed into the Mughul Empire in the 16th century, and Dhaka, the seat of a nawab (the representative of the emperor), gained some importance as a provincial center. But it remained remote and thus a difficult to govern region--especially the section east of the Brahmaputra River--outside the mainstream of Mughul politics. Portuguese traders and missionaries were the first Europeans to reach Bengal in the latter part of the 15th century. They were followed by representatives of the Dutch, the French, and the British East India Companies. By the end of the 17th century, the British presence on the Indian subcontinent was centered in Calcutta. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the British gradually extended their commercial contacts and administrative control beyond Calcutta to Bengal. In 1859, the British Crown replaced the East India Company, extending British dominion from Bengal, which became a region of India, in the east to the Indus River in the west.

The rise of nationalism throughout British-controlled India in the late 19th century resulted in mounting animosity between the Hindu and Muslim communities. In 1885, the All-India National Congress was founded with Indian and British membership. Muslims seeking an organization of their own founded the All-India Muslim League in 1906. Although both the League and the Congress supported the goal of Indian self-government within the British Empire, the two parties were unable to agree on a way to ensure the protection of Muslim political, social, and economic rights. The subsequent history of the nationalist movement was characterized by periods of Hindu-Muslim cooperation, as well as by communal antagonism. The idea of a separate Muslim state gained increasing popularity among Indian Muslims after 1936, when the Muslim League suffered a decisive defeat in the first elections under India's 1935 constitution. In 1940, the Muslim League called for an independent state in regions where Muslims were in the majority. Campaigning on that platform in provincial elections in 1946, the League won the majority of the Muslim seats contested in Bengal. Widespread communal violence followed, especially in Calcutta.

When British India was partitioned and the independent dominions of India and Pakistan were created in 1947, the region of Bengal was divided along religious lines. The predominantly Muslim eastern half was designated East Pakistan--and made part of the newly independent Pakistan--while the predominantly Hindu western part became the Indian state of West Bengal. Pakistan's history from 1947 to 1971 was marked by political instability and economic difficulties. Dominion status was rejected in 1956 in favor of an "Islamic republic within the Commonwealth." Attempts at civilian political rule failed, and the government imposed martial law between 1958 and 1962, and again between 1969 and 1972.

Almost from the advent of independent Pakistan in 1947, frictions developed between East and West Pakistan, which were separated by more than 1,000 miles of Indian territory. East Pakistanis felt exploited by the West Pakistan-dominated central government.

Linguistic, cultural, and ethnic differences also contributed to the estrangement of East from West Pakistan. Bengalis strongly resisted attempts to impose Urdu as the sole official language of Pakistan. Responding to these grievances, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman--known widely as "Mujib"--in 1949 formed the Awami League (AL), a party designed mainly to promote Bengali interests. Mujib became president of the Awami League and emerged as leader of the Bengali autonomy movement. In 1966, he was arrested for his political activities.

After the Awami League won all the East Pakistan seats of the Pakistan national assembly in 1970-71 elections, West Pakistan opened talks with the East on constitutional questions about the division of power between the central government and the provinces, as well as the formation of a national government headed by the Awami League. The talks proved unsuccessful, however, and on March 1, 1971, Pakistani President Yahya Khan indefinitely postponed the pending national assembly session, precipitating massive civil disobedience in East Pakistan. Mujib was arrested again; his party was banned, and most of his aides fled to India, where they organized a provisional government. On March 26, 1971, following a bloody crackdown by the Pakistan army, Bengali nationalists declared an independent People's Republic of Bangladesh. As fighting grew between the army and the Bengali mukti bahini ("freedom fighters"), an estimated 10 million Bengalis, mainly Hindus, sought refuge in the Indian states of Assam and West Bengal.

The crisis in East Pakistan produced new strains in Pakistan's troubled relations with India. The two nations had fought a war in 1965, mainly in the west, but the refugee pressure in India in the fall of 1971 produced new tensions in the east. Indian sympathies lay with East Pakistan, and in November, India intervened on the side of the Bangladeshis. On December 16, 1971, Pakistani forces surrendered, and Bangladesh--meaning "Bengal nation"--was born; the new country became a parliamentary democracy under a 1972 constitution.

ECONOMY

Although one of the world's poorest and most densely populated countries, Bangladesh has made major strides to meet the food needs of its increasing population, through increased domestic production augmented by imports.. The land is devoted mainly to rice and jute cultivation, although wheat production has increased in recent years; the country is largely self-sufficient in rice production. Nonetheless, an estimated 10% to 15% of the population faces serious nutritional risk. Bangladesh's predominantly agricultural economy depends heavily on an erratic monsoonal cycle, with periodic flooding and drought. Although improving, infrastructure to support transportation, communications, and power supply is poorly developed. The country has large reserves of natural gas and limited reserves of coal and oil. While Bangladesh's industrial base is weak, unskilled labor is inexpensive and plentiful.

Since independence in 1971, Bangladesh has received more than $30 billion in grant aid and loan commitments from foreign donors, about $15 billion of which has been disbursed. Major donors include the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the UN Development Program, the United States, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and West European countries. Bangladesh has historically run a large trade deficit, financed largely through aid receipts and remittances from workers overseas. Foreign reserves dropped markedly in 1995 and 1996 but have now stabilized in the $1.5-$1.8 billion range (or about 2.2-2.5 monthly import cover).

Land, Climate, and Demographics

Bangladesh is a low-lying, riverine country located in South Asia with a largely marshy jungle coastline of 710 kilometers (440 mi.) on the northern littoral of the Bay of Bengal. Formed by a deltaic plain at the confluence of the Ganges (Padma), Brahmaputra (Jamuna), and Meghna Rivers and their tributaries, Bangladesh's alluvial soil is highly fertile, but vulnerable to flood and drought. Hills rise above the plain only in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the far southeast and the Sylhet division in the northeast. Straddling the Tropic of Cancer, Bangladesh has a subtropical monsoonal climate characterized by heavy seasonal rainfall, moderately warm temperatures, and high humidity. Natural calamities, such as floods, tropical cyclones, tornadoes, and tidal bores affect the country almost every year. Bangladesh also is affected by major cyclones--on average 16 times a decade.

Urbanization is proceeding rapidly, and it is estimated that only 30% of the population entering the labor force in the future will be absorbed into agriculture, although many will likely find other kinds of work in rural areas. The areas around Dhaka and Comilla are the most densely settled. The Sundarbans, an area of coastal tropical jungle in the southwest and last wild home of the Bengal Tiger, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts on the southeastern border with Burma and India, are the least densely populated.

Moves Toward a Market Economy

Following the violent events of 1971 during the fight for independence, Bangladesh--with the help of large infusions of donor relief and development aid--slowly began to turn its attention to developing new industrial capacity and rehabilitating its economy. The statist economic model adopted by its early leadership, however--including the nationalization of much of the industrial sector--resulted in inefficiency and economic stagnation. Beginning in 1975, the government gradually gave greater scope to private sector participation in the economy, a pattern that has continued. A few state-owned enterprises have been privatized, but many, including major portions of the banking and jute sectors, remain under government control. Population growth, inefficiency in the public sector, and limited natural resources and capital have continued to restrict economic growth. In the mid-1980s, there were encouraging, if halting, signs of progress. Economic policies aimed at encouraging private enterprise and investment, denationalizing public industries, reinstating budgetary discipline, and liberalizing the import regime were accelerated. From 1990-1993. In 1985 1989-1993, the government successfully followed an enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF) with the International Monetary Fund.

Although the Khaleda Zia Government (1991-96) initially took significant strides toward pro-market reform, including tax reform and allowing increased foreign direct investment in the gas and power sectors, preoccupation with its domestic political troubles stalled progress on this critical front in the last year of its tenure. The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, elected in June 1996, indicated that it would continue along the path toward privatization and open-market reform, but progress has been slow, especially in privatization. While the Awami League government has managed to maintain economic growth levels around 4%-5%, and single-digit inflation--except for a period of months after the 1998 floods--per capita income levels still remain distressingly low, at less than $1 per day.

Efforts to achieve Bangladesh's macroeconomic goals have been problematic. The privatization of public sector industries has proceeded at a slow pace, due in part to worker unrest in affected industries. The government also has proven unable to resist demands for wage hikes in government-owned industries. Economic growth has been further slowed by a largely dysfunctional banking system which has impeded access to capital-state-owned banks, which control about three-fourths of deposits and loans, and carry classified loan burdens of about 50%.

Agriculture

Most Bangladeshis earn their living from agriculture. Although rice and jute are the primary crops, wheat is assuming greater importance. Tea is grown in the northeast. Because of Bangladesh's fertile soil and normally ample water supply, rice can be grown and harvested three times a year in many areas. Due to a number of factors, Bangladesh's labor-intensive agriculture has achieved steady increases in foodgrain production despite the often unfavorable weather conditions. These include better flood control and irrigation, a generally more efficient use of fertilizers, and the establishment of better distribution and rural credit networks. With 20.2 million metric tons produced in 1999, rice is Bangladesh's principal crop. By comparison, wheat output in 1999 was 1.9 million metric tons. Population pressure continues to place a severe burden on productive capacity, creating a food deficit, especially of wheat. Foreign assistance and commercial imports fill the gap. Underemployment remains a serious problem, and a growing concern for Bangladesh's agricultural sector will be its ability to absorb additional manpower. Finding alternative sources of employment will continue to be a daunting problem for future governments, particularly with the increasing numbers of landless peasants who already account for about half the rural labor force.

Industry and Investment

Fortunately for Bangladesh, many new jobs--1.5 million, mostly for women--have been created by the country's dynamic private ready-made garment industry, which grew at double-digit rates through most of the 1990s. Despite the country's politically motivated general strikes, poor Infrastructure, and weak financial system, Bangladeshi entrepreneurs have shown themselves adept at competing in the global garments marketplace. Bangladesh's exports to the U.S. surpassed $1.9 billion in 1999. Bangladesh also exports significant amounts of garments and knitwear to the EU market. The country has done less well, however, in expanding its export base--garments account for more than three-fourths of all exports, dwarfing the country's historic cash crop, jute, along with leather, shrimp, pharmaceuticals and ceramics. Bangladesh has been a world leader in its efforts to end the use of child labor in garment factories. On July 4, 1995, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers Export Association, International Labor Organization, and UNICEF signed a memorandum of understanding on the elimination of child labor in the garment sector. Implementation of this pioneering agreement began in fall 1995, and by the end of 1999, child labor in the garment trade virtually had been eliminated.

The labor-intensive process of shipbreaking for scrap has developed to the point where it now meets most of Bangladesh's domestic steel needs. Other industries include sugar, tea, leather goods, newsprint, pharmaceutical, and fertilizer production.

The Bangladesh Government continues to court foreign investment, something it has done fairly successfully in private power generation and gas exploration and production, as well as in other sectors such as cellular telephony, textiles, and pharmaceuticals. In 1989, the same year it signed a bilateral investment treaty with the United States, it established a Board of Investment to simplify approval and start-up procedures for foreign investors, although in practice the board has done little to increase investment. Bangladesh also has established successful export processing zones in Chittagong and Dhaka, and has given the private sector permission to build and operate competing EPZs-initial construction on a Korean EPZ started in 1999. In June 1999, the AFL-CIO petitioned the U.S. Government to deny Bangladesh access to U.S. markets under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), citing the country's failure to meet promises made in 1992 to allow freedom of association in EPZs.

GOVERNMENT

The president, while chief of state, holds a largely ceremonial post; the real power is held by the prime minister, who is head of government. The president is elected by the legislature (Parliament) every 5 years. The president's normally circumscribed powers are substantially expanded during the tenure of a caretaker government. (Under the 13th Amendment, which the Parliament passed in March 1996, a caretaker government assumes power temporarily to oversee general elections after dissolution of the Parliament.) In the caretaker government, the president has control over the Ministry of Defense, the authority to declare a state of emergency, and the power to dismiss the Chief Advisor and other members of the caretaker government. Once elections have been held and a new government and Parliament are in place, the president's powers and position revert to their largely ceremonial role. The prime minister is appointed by the president; the prime minister must be a Member of Parliament (MP) who the president feels commands the confidence of the majority of other MPs. The cabinet is composed of ministers selected by the prime minister and appointed by the president. At least 90%of the ministers must be MPs. The other 10% may be non-MP experts or "technocrats" who are not otherwise disqualified from being elected MPs. According to the constitution, the president can dissolve Parliament upon the written request of the prime minister.

The legislature is a unicameral, 330-seat body. About 300 of its members are elected by universal suffrage at least every 5 years. The remaining 30 seats are reserved for women MPs, elected by the Parliament.

Bangladesh's judiciary is a civil court system based on the British model; the highest court of appeal is the Appellate Court of the Supreme Court. At the local government level, the country is divided into divisions, districts, subdistricts, unions, and villages. Local officials are elected at the union level. All larger administrative units are run by members of the civil service.

DEFENSE

The Bangladesh Army, Navy, and Air Force are composed of regular military members. Some of the senior officers and noncommissioned officers served in the Pakistan military before the 1971 independence war. Senior officers include "repatriates" who were interned in Pakistan during the war, and "freedom fighters" who fought against Pakistan. The 110,000-member, seven-division army is modeled and organized along British lines, similar to other armies on the Indian subcontinent. However, it has adopted U.S. Army tactical planning procedures, training management techniques, and noncommissioned officer educational systems. It also is eager to improve its peacekeeping operations capabilities and is working with the U.S. military in that area. The Bangladesh Air Force is acquiring four U.S. C-130 B transport aircraft. These aircraft will improve the military's disaster response and peacekeeping capabilities. The Air Force also has recently procured eight M IG 29 fighters from Russia for $124 million. The Bangladesh Navy is mostly limited to coastal patrolling, but it is paying to have an ULSAN class frigate built in South Korea. It is supported by artillery, armored, and combat units.

In addition to traditional defense roles, the military has been called on to provide support to civil authorities for disaster relief and internal security. The Bangladesh Air Force and Navy, with about 7,000 personnel each, perform traditional military missions. A Coast Guard has been recently formed, under the Home Ministry, to play a stronger role in the area of anti-smuggling, anti-piracy, and protection of offshore resources. Recognition of economic and fiscal constraints has led to the establishment of several paramilitary and auxiliary forces, including the 40,000-member Bangladesh Rifles; the Ansars and Village Defense Parties Organization, which claims 64 members in every village in the country; and a 5,000-member specialized police unit known as the Armed Police. Bangladesh Rifles, under the authority of the Home Ministry are commanded by army officers who are seconded to the organization.

In addition to in-country military training, some advanced and technical training is done abroad, including grant aid training in the United States. China, Pakistan, and eastern Europe are is the major defense suppliers to Bangladesh, but military leaders are trying to find affordable alternatives to Chinese equipment.

In 1995 the Bangladesh Air Force made its largest purchase from the U.S to date--12 T-37 jet trainers. More recently, Bangladesh procured four C-130 transport aircraft. A 2,300-member Bangladesh Army contingent served with coalition forces during the 1991 Gulf war. Bangladesh is currently the second-leading contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, with an infantry battalion in UNIKOM (Kuwait), an engineer battalion in UNTAET, (East Timor) and another infantry battalion scheduled for Sierra Leone in May 2000.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

The provisional government of the new nation of Bangladesh was formed in Dhaka with Justice Abu Sayeed Choudhury as President, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ("Mujib")--who was released from Pakistani prison in early 1972--as Prime Minister.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 1972-75

Mujib came to office with immense personal popularity, but had difficulty transforming this popular support into the political strength needed to function as head of government. The new constitution, which came into force in December 1972, created a strong executive prime minister, a largely ceremonial presidency, an independent judiciary, and a unicameral legislature on a modified Westminster model. The 1972 constitution adopted as state policy the Awami League's (AL) four basic principles of nationalism, secularism, socialism, and democracy.

The first parliamentary elections held under the 1972 constitution were in March 1973, with the Awami League winning a massive majority. No other political party in Bangladesh's early years was able to duplicate or challenge the League's broad-based appeal, membership, or organizational strength. Relying heavily on experienced civil servants and members of the Awami League, the new Bangladesh Government focused on relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of the economy and society. Economic conditions remained precarious, however. In December 1974, Mujib decided that continuing economic deterioration and mounting civil disorder required strong measures. After proclaiming a state of emergency, Mujib used his parliamentary majority to win a constitutional amendment limiting the powers of the legislative and judicial branches, establishing an executive presidency, and instituting a one-party system, the Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL), which all members of Parliament were obliged to join.

Despite some improvement in the economic situation during the first half of 1975, implementation of promised political reforms was slow, and criticism of government policies became increasingly centered on Mujib. In August 1975, Mujib, and most of his family, were assassinated by mid-level army officers. His daughter, Sheikh Hasina, happened to be out of the country. A new government, headed by former Mujib associate Khandakar Moshtaque, was formed.

Ziaur Rahman, 1975-81

Successive military coups resulted in the emergence of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ziaur Rahman ("Zia") as strongman. He pledged the army's support to the civilian government headed by President Chief Justice Sayem. Acting at Zia's behest, Sayem dissolved Parliament, promising fresh elections in 1977, and instituted martial law.

Acting behind the scenes of the Martial Law Administration (MLA), Zia sought to invigorate government policy and administration. While continuing the ban on political parties, he sought to revitalize the demoralized bureaucracy, to begin new economic development programs, and to emphasize family planning. In November 1976, Zia became Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and assumed the presidency upon Sayem's retirement 5 months later, promising national elections in 1978.

As President, Zia announced a 19-point program of economic reform and began dismantling the MLA. Keeping his promise to hold elections, Zia won a 5-year term in June 1978 elections, with 76% of the vote. In November 1978, his government removed the remaining restrictions on political party activities in time for parliamentary elections in February 1979. These elections, which were contested by more than 30 parties, marked the culmination of Zia's transformation of Bangladesh's Government from the MLA to a democratically elected, constitutional one. The AL and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), founded by Zia, emerged as the two major parties. The constitution was again amended to provide for an executive prime minister appointed by the president, and responsible to a parliamentary majority.

In May 1981, Zia was assassinated in Chittagong by dissident elements of the military. The attempted coup never spread beyond that city, and the major conspirators were either taken into custody or killed. In accordance with the constitution, Vice President Justice Abdus Sattar was sworn in as acting president. He declared a new national emergency and called for election of a new president within 6 months--an election Sattar won as the BNP's candidate. President Sattar sought to follow the policies of his predecessor and retained essentially the same cabinet, but the army stepped in once again.

Hussain Mohammed Ershad, 1982-90

Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. H.M. Ershad assumed power in a bloodless coup in March 1982. Like his predecessors, Ershad suspended the constitution and--citing pervasive corruption, ineffectual government, and economic mismanagement--declared martial law. The following year, Ershad assumed the presidency, retaining his positions as army chief and CMLA. During most of 1984, Ershad sought the opposition parties' participation in local elections under martial law. The opposition's refusal to participate, however, forced Ershad to abandon these plans. Ershad sought public support for his regime in a national referendum on his leadership in March 1985. He won overwhelmingly, although turnout was small. Two months later, Ershad held elections for local council chairmen. Pro-government candidates won a majority of the posts, setting in motion the President's ambitious decentralization program. Political life was further liberalized in early 1986, and additional political rights, including the right to hold large public rallies, were restored. At the same time, the Jatiya (People's) Party, designed as Ershad's political vehicle for the transition from martial law, was established.

Despite a boycott by the BNP, led by President Zia's widow, Begum Khaleda Zia, parliamentary elections were held on schedule in May 1986. The Jatiya Party won a modest majority of the 300 elected seats in the national assembly. The participation of the Awami League--led by the late Prime Minister Mujib's daughter, Sheikh Hasina Wajed--lent the elections some credibility, despite widespread charges of voting irregularities.

Ershad resigned as Army Chief of Staff and retired from military service in preparation for the presidential elections, scheduled for October. Protesting that martial law was still in effect, both the BNP and the AL refused to put up opposing candidates. Ershad easily outdistanced the remaining candidates, taking 84% of the vote. Although Ershad's government claimed a turnout of more than 50%, opposition leaders, and much of the foreign press, estimated a far lower percentage and alleged voting irregularities.

Ershad continued his stated commitment to lift martial law. In November 1986, his government mustered the necessary two-thirds majority in the national assembly to amend the constitution and confirm the previous actions of the martial law regime. The President then lifted martial law, and the opposition parties took their elected seats in the national assembly.

In July 1987, however, after the government hastily pushed through a controversial legislative bill to include military representation on local administrative councils, the opposition walked out of Parliament. Passage of the bill helped spark an opposition movement that quickly gathered momentum, uniting Bangladesh's opposition parties for the first time. The government began to arrest scores of opposition activists under the country's Special Powers Act of 1974. Despite these arrests, opposition parties continued to organize protest marches and nationwide strikes. After declaring a state of emergency, Ershad dissolved Parliament and scheduled fresh elections for March 1988.

All major opposition parties refused government overtures to participate in these polls, maintaining that the government was incapable of holding free and fair elections. Despite the opposition boycott, the government proceeded. The ruling Jatiya Party won 251 of the 300 seats. The Parliament, while still regarded by the opposition as an illegitimate body, held its sessions as scheduled, and passed a large number of bills, including, in June 1988, a controversial constitutional amendment making Islam Bangladesh's state religion.

By 1989, the domestic political situation in the country seemed to have quieted. The local council elections were generally considered by international observers to have been less violent and more free and fair than previous elections. However, opposition to Ershad's rule began to regain momentum, escalating by the end of 1990 in frequent general strikes, increased campus protests, public rallies, and a general disintegration of law and order.

On December 6, 1990, Ershad offered his resignation. On February 27, 1991, after 2 months of widespread civil unrest, an interim government oversaw what most observers believed to be the nation's most free and fair elections to date.

Khaleda Zia, 1991-96

The center-right BNP won a plurality of seats and formed a coalition government with the Islamic fundamentalist party Jamaat-I-Islami, with Khaleda Zia, widow of Ziaur Rahman, obtaining the post of Prime Minister. Only four parties had more than 10 members elected to the 1991 Parliament: The BNP, led by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia; the AL, led by Sheikh Hasina; the Jamaat-I-Islami (JI), led by Golam Azam; and the Jatiyo Party (JP), led by acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Choudhury while its founder, former President Ershad, served out a prison sentence on corruption charges. The electorate approved still more changes to the constitution, formally re-creating a parliamentary system and returning governing power to the office of the prime minister, as in Bangladesh's original 1972 constitution. In October 1991, members of Parliament elected a new head of state, President Abdur Rahman Biswas.

In March 1994, controversy over a parliamentary by-election, which the opposition claimed the government had rigged, led to an indefinite boycott of Parliament by the entire opposition. The opposition also began a program of repeated general strikes to press its demand that Khaleda Zia's government resign and a caretaker government supervise a general election. Efforts to mediate the dispute, under the auspices of the Commonwealth Secretariat, failed. After another attempt at a negotiated settlement failed narrowly in late December 1994, the opposition resigned en masse from Parliament. The opposition then continued a campaign of marches, demonstrations, and strikes in an effort to force the government to resign. The opposition, including the Awami League's Sheikh Hasina , pledged to boycott national elections scheduled for February 15, 1996.

In February, Khaleda Zia was re-elected by a landslide in voting boycotted and denounced as unfair by the three main opposition parties. In March 1996, following escalating political turmoil, the sitting Parliament enacted a constitutional amendment to allow a neutral caretaker government to assume power conduct new parliamentary elections; former Chief Justice Mohammed Habibur Rahman was named Chief Advisor (a position equivalent to prime minister) in the interim government. New parliamentary elections were held in June 1996 and were won by the Awami League; party leader Sheikh Hasina became Prime Minister.

Sheikh Hasina, 1996-Present

Sheikh Hasina formed what she called a "Government of National Consensus" in June 1996, which included one minister from the Jatiya Party and another from the Jatiyo Samajtantric Dal, a very small leftist party. The Jatiya Party never entered into a formal coalition arrangement, and party president H.M. Ershad withdrew his support from the government in September 1997. Only three parties had more than 10 members elected to the 1996 Parliament: The Awami League, BNP, and Jatiya Party. Jatiya Party president, Ershad, was released from prison on bail in January 1997.

Although international and domestic election observers found the June 1996 election free and fair, the BNP protested alleged vote rigging by the Awami League. Ultimately, however, the BNP party decided to join the new Parliament. The BNP soon charged that police and Awami League activists were engaged in large-scale harassment and jailing of opposition activists. At the end of 1996, the BNP staged a parliamentary walkout over this and other grievances but returned in January 1997 under a four-point agreement with the ruling party. The BNP asserted that this agreement was never implemented and later staged another walkout in August 1997. The BNP returned to Parliament under another agreement in March 1998.

In June 1999, the BNP and other opposition parties again began to abstain from attending Parliament. Opposition parties have staged an increasing number of nationwide general strikes, rising from 6 days of general strikes in 1997 to 27 days in 1999. A four-party opposition alliance formed at the beginning of 1999 announced that it would boycott parliamentary by-elections and local government elections unless the government took steps demanded by the opposition to ensure electoral fairness. The government did not take these steps, and the opposition has subsequently boycotted all elections, including municipal council elections in February 1999, several parliamentary by-elections, and the Chittagong city corporation elections in January 2000. The opposition demands that the Awami League government step down immediately to make way for a caretaker government to preside over paliamentary and local government

Principal Government Officials

President--Shahabuddin Ahmed (term ends October 2001)
Prime Minister--Sheikh Hasina
Foreign Minister--Abdus Samad Azad
Ambassador to the U.S.--K.M. Shehabuddin
Ambassador to the UN--Anwarul Karim Chowdhury

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Bangladesh pursues a moderate foreign policy that places heavy reliance on multinational diplomacy, especially at the United Nations.

Participation in Multilateral Organizations

Bangladesh was admitted to the United Nations in 1974 and was elected to a Security Council term in 1978 and again for a 2000-2002 term. Foreign Minister Choudhury served as president of the 41st UN General Assembly in 1986. Bangladesh is slated to become the next chairman of NAM at the summit scheduled for Dhaka 2001. Bangladesh is currently chairman of the Group of 8 Developing Countries. The government has participated in numerous international conferences, especially those dealing with population, food, development, and women's issues. In 1982-83, Bangladesh played a constructive role as chairman of the "Group of 77," an informal association encompassing most of the world's developing nations. In 1983, Bangladesh hosted the foreign ministers meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). It has taken a leading role in the "Group of 48" developing countries.

Since 1975, Bangladesh has sought close relations with other Islamic states and a prominent role among moderate members of the OIC. The government also pursued the expansion of cooperation among the nations of South Asia, bringing the process--an initiative of former President Ziaur Rahman--through its earliest, most tentative stages to the formal inauguration of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) at a summit gathering of South Asian leaders in Dhaka in December 1985. Bangladesh has served in the chairmanship of SAARC and has participated in a wide range of ongoing SAARC regional activities.

In recent years, Bangladesh has played a significant role in international peacekeeping activities. Several thousand Bangladeshi military personnel are deployed overseas on peacekeeping operations. Under UN auspices, Bangladeshi troops have served or are serving in Somalia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Kuwait, Bosnia, and Haiti, and units are currently serving in Kuwait and East Timor. Bangladesh responded quickly to President Clinton's 1994 request for troops and police for the multinational force for Haiti and provided the largest non-U.S. contingent.

Bilateral Relations with Other Nations

Bangladesh is bordered on the west, north, and east by a 2,400-kilometer land frontier with India, and on the southeast by a land and water frontier (193 kilometers) with Burma.

India. India is Bangladesh's most important neighbor. Geographic, cultural, historic, and commercial ties are strong, and both countries recognize the importance of good relations. During and immediately after Bangladesh's struggle for independence from Pakistan in 1971, India assisted refugees from East Pakistan, intervened militarily to help bring about the independence of Bangladesh, and furnished relief and reconstruction aid.

Indo-Bangladesh relations are often strained, and many Bangladeshis feel India likes to play "big brother" to smaller neighbors, including Bangladesh. Bilateral relations warmed in 1996, due to a softer Indian foreign policy and the new Awami League Government. A 30-year water-sharing agreement for the Ganges River was signed in December 1996, after an earlier bilateral water-sharing agreement for the Ganges River lapsed in 1988. Both nations also have cooperated on the issue of flood warning and preparedness. The government and tribal insurgents signed a peace accord in December 1997, which allowed for the return of tribal refugees who had fled into India, beginning in 1986, to escape violence caused by an insurgency in their homeland in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The implementation of all parts of this agreement have stalled, and the army maintains a very strong presence in the area. The army is increasingly concerned about a growing problem of cultivation of illegal drugs.

Pakistan. Bangladesh enjoys warm relations with Pakistan, despite the strained early days of their relationship. Landmarks in their reconciliation are:

- An August 1973 agreement between Bangladesh and Pakistan on the repatriation of numerous individuals, including 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war stranded in Bangladesh as a result of the 1971 conflict;
- A February 1974 accord by Bangladesh and Pakistan on

mutual recognition, followed more than 2 years later by establishment of formal diplomatic relations;
- The organization by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of an airlift that moved almost 250,000 Bengalis from Pakistan to Bangladesh, and non-Bengalis from Bangladesh to Pakistan; and
- Exchanges of high-level visits, including a visit by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to Bangladesh in 1989 and visits by Prime Minister Zia to Pakistan in 1992 and in 1995.

Still to be resolved are the division of assets from the pre-1971 period and the status of more than 250,000 non-Bengali Muslims (known as "Biharis") remaining in Bangladesh but seeking resettlement in Pakistan.

Burma. Bilateral ties with Burma are good, despite occasional border strains and an influx of more than 270,000 Muslim refugees (known as "Rohingya") from predominantly Buddhist Burma. As a result of bilateral discussions, and with the cooperation and assistance of the UNHCR, most of the Rohingya refugees have now returned to Burma. As of 2000, about 22,000 refugees remain in camps in southern Bangladesh.

Former Soviet Union. The former Soviet Union supported India's actions during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war and was among the first to recognize Bangladesh. The U.S.S.R. initially contributed considerable relief and rehabilitation aid to the new nation. After Sheikh Mujib was assassinated in 1975 and replaced by military regimes, however, Soviet-Bangladesh relations cooled.

In 1989, the U.S.S.R. ranked 14th among aid donors to Bangladesh. The Soviets focused on the development of electrical power, natural gas and oil, and maintained active cultural relations with Bangladesh. They financed the Ghorasal thermal power station--the largest in Bangladesh. Recently, Russia has conducted an aggressive military sales effort in Dhaka and has succeeded with a $124 million deal for eight MIG -29 fighters. Bangladesh began to open diplomatic relations with the newly independent Central Asian states in 1992.

China. China traditionally has been more important to Bangladesh than the former U.S.S.R., even though China supported Pakistan in 1971. As Bangladesh's relations with the Soviet Union and India cooled in the mid-1970s, and as Bangladesh and Pakistan became reconciled, China's relations with Bangladesh grew warmer. An exchange of diplomatic missions in February 1976 followed an accord on recognition in late 1975.

Since that time, relations have grown stronger, centering on trade, cultural activities, military and civilian aid, and exchanges of high-level visits, beginning in January 1977 with President Zia's trip to Beijing. The largest and most visible symbol of bilateral amity is the Bangladesh-China "Friendship Bridge," completed in

1989 near Dhaka, as well as the extensive military hardware in the Bangladesh inventory and warm military relations between the two countries. In the 1990s, the Chinese also built two 210 megawatt power plants outside of Chittagong; mechanical faults in the plants cause them to frequently shut down for days at a time, heightening the country's power shortage.

Other countries in South Asia. Bangladesh maintains friendly relations with Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka and strongly opposed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Bangladesh and Nepal recently agreed to facilitate land transit between the two countries.

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program provides Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, and Public Announcements. **Consular Information Sheets** exist for all countries and include information on entry requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, areas of instability, crime and security, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. posts in the country. **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. **Public Announcements** are issued as a means to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas which pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. Free copies of this information are available by calling the Bureau of Consular Affairs at 202-647-5225 or via the fax-on-demand system: 202-647-3000. Consular Information Sheets and Travel Warnings also are available on the Consular Affairs Internet home page: http://travel.state.gov. Consular Affairs Tips for Travelers publication series, which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad are on the internet and hard copies can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, telephone: 202-512-1800; fax 202-512-2250.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained from the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at (202) 647-5225. For after-hours emergencies, Sundays and holidays, call 202-647-4000.

Passport information can be obtained by calling the National Passport Information Center's automated system ($.35 per minute) or live operators 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (EST) Monday-Friday ($1.05 per minute). The number is 1-900-225-5674 (TDD: 1-900-225-7778). Major credit card users (for a flat rate of $4.95) may call 1-888-362-8668 (TDD: 1-888-498-3648). It also is available on the internet.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) and a web site at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. A booklet entitled Health Information for International Travel (HHS publication number CDC-95-8280) is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, tel. (202) 512-1800.

Information on travel conditions, visa requirements, currency and customs regulations, legal holidays, and other items of interest to travelers also may be obtained before your departure from a country's embassy and/or consulates in the U.S. (for this country, see "Principal Government Officials" listing in this publication).

U.S. citizens who are long-term visitors or traveling in dangerous areas are encouraged to register at the U.S. embassy upon arrival in a country (see "Principal U.S. Embassy Officials" listing in this publication). This may help family members contact you in case of an emergency.

Further Electronic Information

Department of State Foreign Affairs Network. Available on the Internet, DOSFAN provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information. Updated daily, DOSFAN includes Background Notes; daily press briefings; Country Commercial Guides; directories of key officers of foreign service posts; etc. DOSFAN's World Wide Web site is at http://www.state.gov.

U.S. Foreign Affairs on CD-ROM (USFAC). Published on an annual basis by the U.S. Department of State, USFAC archives information on the Department of State Foreign Affairs Network, and includes an array of official foreign policy information from 1990 to the present. Contact the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. To order, call (202) 512-1800 or fax (202) 512-2250.

National Trade Data Bank (NTDB). Operated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the NTDB contains a wealth of trade-related information. It is available on the Internet (www.stat-usa.gov) and on CD-ROM. Call the NTDB Help-Line at (202) 482-1986 for more information.

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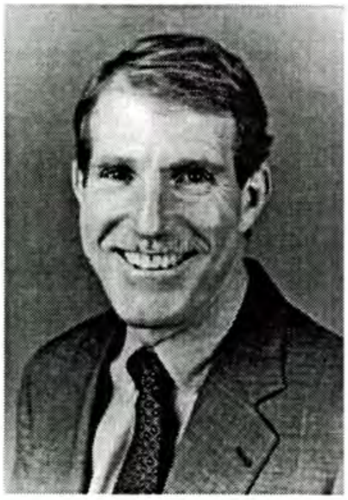
Bangladesh Background Notes | Bureau of South Asian Affairs Home Page | Department of State



John C. Holzman
U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh

Ambassador John C. Holzman presented his credentials to Bangladesh President Shahabuddin on September 2, 1997. Ambassador Holzman's prior assignments include Deputy Chief of Mission at the American Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan (1994-1997), Director of the Office of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh affairs in the Bureau of South Asian Affairs at the State Department in Washington, D.C. (1992-94), Deputy Chief of Mission at the American Embassy in Accra, Ghana (1989-92), and Deputy Director of the Office of Israel and Israeli Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department in Washington, D.C. (1986-1989). Ambassador Holzman joined the Foreign Service in 1973. He is a 1967 graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, and he received a Masters from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in 1972.

Ambassador Holzman is married to Kim Hom. The Holzman's have three children: Leah, Nicole, and Alexandra.

Key U.S. Officials in Dhaka

Deputy Chief of Mission
Theodore A. Nist

Political Affairs
Dan W. Mozena

Economic Affairs
Timothy Forsyth

Consular Affairs
Steven F. Harper

Administrative Affairs
Lawrence S. Blackburn

Regional Security Affairs
Daniel C. Becker

Public Affairs
John S. Kincannon

Clinton Presidential Records
Digital Records Marker

Divider Title: **PAKISTAN**

Base 802459 (R02122) 6-96

CURRENCY CONVERSION

Pakistani Rupee at 51.3 = U.S. $

Rupee to U.S. Dollars		U.S. Dollars to Rupee	
Rupee	**U.S. $**	**U.S. $**	**Rupee**
0.00	0.19	0.10	5.13
15.00	0.29	0.25	12.83
25.00	0.49	0.50	25.65
35.00	0.68	0.75	38.48
51.30	1.00	1.00	51.30
1,000.00	19.49	3.00	153.90
5,000.00	97.47	5.00	256.50
20,000.00	389.86	10.00	513.00
50,000.00	974.66	20.00	1,026.00
100,000.00	1,949.32	50.00	2,565.00
200,000.00	3,898.64	100.00	5,130.00
350,000.00	6,822.61	300.00	15,390.00
500,000.00	9,746.59	500.00	25,650.00

NOTE: All U.S. dollar values are rounded to the nearest U.S. cent. The value of the Pakistani Rupee fluctuates daily according to currency market conditions.

March 2000

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Washington, DC 20520
For recorded travel information, call 202-647-5225
Internet Address: http://travel.state.gov
For information by fax, call 202-647-3000 from your fax machine

Consular Information Sheet

Pakistan

September 14, 1999

WARNING: The Department of State warns U.S. citizens to evaluate carefully the implications for their security and safety before deciding to travel to Pakistan.

Recent information received by the U.S. Government suggests a continued need for vigilance on the part of American citizens resident in, or traveling through, Pakistan.

The U.S. Government has received a growing body of information that suggests strongly that extremists based in Afghanistan are preparing to attack U.S. interests in Pakistan, in the near future.

Given the presence of international terrorist Usama Bin Ladin in neighboring Afghanistan and the public sympathy and support for him in Pakistan, the Department urges all American citizens resident in, or traveling through, Pakistan to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness.

Further, due to recent threats against U.S. citizens in Pakistan, on August 6, the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad decided to defer all official travel to the tribal areas of Pakistan's northwest frontier province, areas which lie outside the normal jurisdiction of the Government of Pakistan. At the same time, the U.S. Embassy urges that private Americans defer planned travel through or to the tribal areas.

Additionally, while tension between India and Pakistan over the military situation in Kargil, Kashmir, has declined, certain extremist groups in Pakistan have voiced opposition to the Government of Pakistan's role in the de-escalation. In the past, such groups have also issued threats against Americans, the U.S. Government and U.S. facilities overseas. One such group, the Harakat-Ul-Mujahideen, recently issued "a ban" against "the travel of all American citizens, including diplomats," to Kashmir in India. This group, previously known as the Harakat-Ul-Ansar, has been active on both sides of the Line of Control between India and Pakistan.

U.S. citizens in Pakistan are strongly urged to register and obtain updated security information at the American Embassy in Islamabad, the U.S. Consulate General in Karachi, the U.S. Consulate in Lahore, or the Consulate in Peshawar at the addresses listed in the Registration/Embassy Location section below.

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Pakistan is a developing country with a parliamentary democracy. Tourist facilities are available in the principal population centers of the country.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: A passport and visa are required. The visa must be obtained from a Pakistani embassy or consulate before arrival. Information on entry requirements can be obtained from the Embassy of Pakistan, 2315 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20008, telephone (202)939-6200, Internet home page: http://www.pakistan-embassy.com. Travelers may also contact one of the Consulates General of Pakistan located at 12 East 65th St., New York, NY 10021, telephone (212)879-5800, or 18050 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1100, Los Angeles, CA 90010, (310)441-5114. If a traveler plans to stay longer than 30 days in Pakistan, he or she must register with the local police station and obtain a residence permit. This permit must be returned to the same office for an exit visa when the traveler is preparing to leave the country. Airlines may require travelers departing the U.S. to present multiple photographs and complete copies of passports and other travel documents.

SAFETY/SECURITY/AREAS OF INSTABILITY: Rallies, demonstrations and processions occur from time to time throughout Pakistan on very short notice and have occasionally taken on an anti-American or anti-Western character. Karachi and the southern parts of Punjab province have experienced protracted political or sectarian violence that, although not explicitly anti-American, poses a potential danger to American travelers. During the Islamic religious observances of Ramadan and Moharram, sectarian rivalry and violence often increase.

Northern Areas - Visitors wishing to trek in Gilgit, Hunza, Chitral and the upper Swat valley should use only licensed guides and tourist agencies. There have been occasional assaults and in 1998, a U.S. tourist who was not accompanied by a guide was murdered in Gilgit.

Northwest Frontier Province - Because of dangerous security conditions, the U.S. Embassy has decided to defer all official travel to the tribal areas. At the present time, the U.S. Embassy urges that private Americans also defer planned travel through or to the same areas, even if traveling overland to the Khyber Pass. Substantial areas within the Northwest Frontier Province are designated tribal areas and are outside the normal jurisdiction of government law enforcement authorities. Visitors risk being caught in armed clashes between feudal tribal factions or smugglers. Carjackings and the abduction of foreigners are occasionally reported from the tribal areas. If visitors must enter the tribal areas, a permit from the Home and Tribal Affairs Department is required. The permit may stipulate that an armed escort must accompany the visitor. Even in the settled areas of the Northwest Frontier Province, there is occasional ethnic, sectarian, and political violence as well as anti-foreign rhetoric; foreigners should steer clear of such demonstrations or known areas of conflict. However, the monthly steam train excursion for tourists through the Khyber Pass is well protected by local authorities.

Punjab Province - Sectarian violence decreased considerably during the first half of 1999, from the high 1998 levels of violence, which resulted in dozens of deaths. While Americans are not targets of this violence, the foreign community is not immune, as evidenced by the 1997 assassination of five Iranians in an attack widely believed to have had sectarian overtones. As a precaution against possible dangers resulting from sectarian violence, U.S. citizens are cautioned to avoid public transportation and crowded areas.

Sindh Province - In the areas of Karachi and Hyderabad there have been recurring outbreaks of ethnic and sectarian violence characterized by random bombings, shootings and mass demonstrations. These have resulted in deaths and the imposition of curfews. There have also been numerous incidents of kidnappings for ransom. In rural Sindh Province, the security situation is hazardous, especially in regard to overland travel. Foreigners have occasionally been kidnapped and, in a 1995 incident, the foreign kidnap victim was killed in a subsequent gunfight between police and bandits. The Government of Pakistan has recommended that travelers limit their movements in Sindh Province to the city of Karachi. If visitors must go into the interior of Sindh Province, the Government of Pakistan requests that travelers inform police authorities well in advance of the trip so that necessary police security arrangements can be made.

Baluchistan Province - The province of Baluchistan, which borders both Iran and Afghanistan, is notorious for cross-border smuggling. Armed battles between clans are frequent. Because provincial police presence is limited, travelers wishing to visit the interior of Baluchistan should consult with the province's Home Secretary. Advance permission from provincial authorities is required for travel into some areas. Local authorities have detained travelers who lack permission. Although Quetta, the provincial capital, is quieter than the interior, it has experienced serious ethnic violence that has led to gun battles in the streets and the imposition of curfews.

CRIME INFORMATION: Crime is a serious concern for foreigners throughout Pakistan, with violent crime increasing faster than any other category. Carjackings, armed robberies, house invasions and other violence against civilians have increased steadily in the major urban areas. Lahore and Karachi, in particular, experience high levels of crime. They are large cities beset by poverty, high unemployment, and underpaid, under-manned police forces. Travelers in Karachi are encouraged to use hotel shuttles from the airport rather than taxis, which are subject to police harassment, especially after dark. Petty crime, especially theft of personal property, is common throughout Pakistan.

The loss or theft of a U.S. passport abroad should be reported immediately to local police and to the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. U.S. citizens can refer to the Department of State pamphlets "A Safe Trip Abroad" and "Tips for Travelers to South Asia" for ways to promote a more trouble-free journey. The pamphlets are available by mail from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, via the Internet at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su docs, or via the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at http://travel.state.gov.

MEDICAL FACILITIES: Adequate medical care is available in major cities in Pakistan, but is limited in rural areas. Serious medical problems requiring hospitalization and/or medical evacuation to the United States can cost thousands of dollars or more. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services, and U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas may face extreme difficulties. Check with your own insurance company to confirm whether your policy applies overseas, including provision for medical evacuation. Ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas hospital or doctor or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses you incur. Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death. Useful information on medical emergencies abroad, including overseas insurance programs, is provided in the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs brochure "Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad," available via the Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet home page or by autofax at 202-647-3000.

OTHER HEALTH INFORMATION: Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax: 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or via their Internet site at http://www.cdc.gov.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: Road travel in Pakistan is risky. Roads are crowded, drivers are aggressive and poorly trained, and many vehicles, particularly large trucks and buses, are badly maintained. Roads, including most major highways, also suffer from poor maintenance and often have numerous potholes, sharp drop-offs and barriers that are not sign-posted. Driving without experienced local drivers or guides is not recommended. For specific current information on road conditions along the Karakoram Highway, travelers may contact the Frontier Works Organization in Rawalpindi at telephone 92-51-566639.

The information below concerning traffic safety and road conditions in Pakistan is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance

Safety of Public Transportation: Poor
Urban Road Condition/Maintenance: Good to Poor
Rural Road condition/Maintenance: Poor
Availability of Roadside Assistance: Poor

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the Government of Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority as Category 2 -- not in compliance with international aviation safety standards for oversight of Pakistan's air carrier operations. While consultations to correct the deficiencies are ongoing, Pakistan's air carriers are permitted to conduct limited operations to the U.S. subject to heightened FAA surveillance. For further information, travelers may contact the Department of Transportation within the U.S. at 1-800-322-7873, or visit the FAA's Internet website at http://www.faa.gov/avr/iasa/index.htm. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) does not permit its personnel to use air carriers from Category 2 countries for official business except for flights originating from or terminating in the U.S. For information regarding the DOD policy on specific carriers, travelers may contact the DOD at (618) 256-4801.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS: Import of firearms, pornographic material and alcohol is restricted. An import permit and health certificate are required for animals. There are also restrictions on leaving Pakistan with antiquities or animals. Contact the Pakistani Embassy in Washington, DC or the nearest Pakistani Consulate for specific information regarding customs.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating Pakistani laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession of, use of, or trafficking in illegal drugs are strictly enforced. Long jail sentences are frequently imposed and large fines are assessed in some cases. Legislation passed in 1994 makes trafficking offenses punishable by death.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Pakistan is largely a cash economy. Personal checks are not commonly accepted. Most Pakistanis do not use checking accounts for routine transactions. Credit cards and traveler's checks are accepted by only a few establishments in the larger cities. There are bank branches as well as registered money changers in all international airports. ATMs are usually not found in airports. English is widely spoken by professional level airport staff. It is best to agree on taxi fares before hiring a driver. Currently, U.S. Embassy employees are restricted from using taxis for security reasons.

Y2K INFORMATION: As a consequence of the so-called Y2K "bug", on or about January 1, 2000, some automated systems throughout the world may experience problems, including unpredictable system malfunctions. In countries that are not prepared, the Y2K problem could affect financial services, utilities, health services, telecommunications, energy, transportation and other vital services. American citizens who are traveling to any country during this time period should be aware of the potential for the disruption of normal medical services. Travelers with special medical needs should consult with their personal physician and take appropriate precautions. Being informed and prepared for possible disruptions is prudent.

Pakistan is not heavily reliant on computerized systems and appears to be somewhat prepared to deal with the Y2K problem. It established a national-level Y2K task force with a national coordinator in November 1998. Both government and private entities, however, came to focus on Y2K only in late 1998 or early 1999. A late start and inadequate funding to address the Y2K problem suggests that Y2K disruptions are likely.

Pakistan continues remediation efforts and contingency planning to reduce the risk of potential Y2K disruption. However, despite these efforts, there is significant risk of Y2K disruption in the key sectors, including low to moderate for banking, finance and telecommunications and high risk for electric power and health care. Information is not available to judge the scope and duration of these disruptions. U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in Pakistan in late 1999 or early 2000 should be aware of potential difficulties.

It is difficult to predict the severity or duration of Y2K related disruptions. U.S. citizens in Pakistan should take practical precautions, anticipate the potential for disruption to their daily activities, and be prepared to cope with the impact of such disruptions. Information about personal preparedness and Y2K is available in the Department of State Worldwide Public Announcement of July 26, 1999, which is accessible on the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at http://travel.state.gov/y2kca.html.

Aviation and Y2K: The Department of Transportation is heading an international Year 2000 civil aviation evaluation process to review information on Y2K readiness in aviation based on reports to the International Civil Aviation Organization and other available sources. The Federal Aviation Administration is working with the industry and its international partners to encourage sharing of Y2K readiness and contingency planning information so that air carriers will be able to make appropriate decisions. Consult your airline about contingency plans in the event of unforeseen Y2K-related delays, cancellations, or disruptions. See the Department of Transportation Y2K home page at http://www.dot.gov/fly2k for updated information on Y2K and aviation issues.

As January 1, 2000, draws nearer, we will provide updated information available to us about important Y2K issues in Pakistan on the Consular Affairs home page at http://travel.state.gov/y2kca.html. In addition, monitor the home page of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad at http://www.usia.gov/abtusia/posts/PK1/wwwhusis.html and the Pakistan Computer Bureau's website at http://pcb.gov.pk/y2k.html for additional updates.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES: For information on international adoption of children, international parental child abduction, and international child support enforcement issues, please refer to our Internet site at http://travel.state.gov/children's_issues.html or telephone 202-736-7000.

REGISTRATION/EMBASSY AND CONSULATE LOCATIONS: American citizens living in or visiting Pakistan are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in Pakistan and obtain updated information on travel and security within Pakistan. They are located at the following addresses:

-- The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad is located at Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5, telephone 92-51-2080-0000; consular section telephone (92-51) 2080-2700, fax (92-51) 822--632, website http://www.usia.gov/abtusia/posts/PK1/wwwhusis.html.

-- The U.S. Consulate General in Karachi is located at 8 Abdullah Haroon Road, telephone (92-21) 568-5170 (after hours: 92-21-568-1606),
fax (92-21) 568-0496, website http://www.usia.gov/abtusia/posts/PK2/wwwhamcn.html.

-- In U.S. Consulate in Lahore is located on Sharah-E-Abdul Hamid Bin Badees, 50 Empress Road, New Simla Hills, telephone (92-42) 636-5530, fax (92-42) 636-5177, website http://usconsulate-lahore.org.pk/.

-- The U.S. Consulate in Peshawar is located at 11 Hospital Road, Peshawar Cantonment, telephone (92-91) 279-801, fax (92-91) 276-712, website http://brain.net.pk2~consul/.

The normal work week in Pakistan is Monday through Saturday, with a half-day worked on Friday. However, the U.S. Embassy and consulates are open Monday through Friday.

This replaces the Consular Information Sheet for Pakistan dated April 28, 1999, to update the Travel Warning, information on entry requirements, criminal penalties, Y2K information and registration/embassy location.

U.S. Department of State, March 2000
Bureau of South Asian Affairs

Background Notes: Pakistan

People

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Government and Political Conditions

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Geographic Learning Site

Home Page

Official Name:
Islamic Republic of Pakistan

PROFILE

Geography

Area: 803,943 sq. km. (310,527 sq. mi.); about twice the size of California.
Cities: *Capital*--Islamabad and adjacent Rawalpindi comprise a national capital area with a combined population of 3.7 million. *Other cities*--Karachi (10 million), Lahore (5.7 million), Faisalabad (6.5 million).

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Pakistan(i).
Population (1998 estimate): 135 million.
Annual growth rate (1998): 2.6%.
Ethnic groups: Punjabi, Sindhi, Pathan (Pushtun), Baloch, Muhajir (i.e., Urdu-speaking immigrants from India and their descendants), Saraiki, Hazara.
Religions: Muslim 97%; small minorities of Christians, Hindus, and others.
Languages: Urdu (national and official), English, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushtu, Baloch.
Education: Literacy (1999) 45%. Unofficial estimates are as low as 35%.
Health: *Infant mortality rate* (1997)--85/1,000. *Life expectancy* (1999)--men 63 yrs., women 63 yrs.
Work force (1999): *Agriculture*--44%. *Services*--30%. *Industry*--26%.

Government

Type: Military. Parliamentary democracy suspended on October 12, 1999.
Independence: August 14, 1947.
Branches: *Executive*--The Chief of Army Staff serves as Chief Executive and is advised by a mixed civilian/military National Security Council and civilian Cabinet. Provinces are headed by a Governor and provincial cabinet, who are civilians appointed by the Chief Executive. *Judicial*--Supreme Court, provincial high courts, and Federal Islamic Court. On January 26, 2000, justices were required to take an oath of loyalty to the Chief Executive and the Provisional Constitutional Order that placed the constitution in abeyance.

Political parties: the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) are national political parties. Other parties with a strong regional, ethnic or religious base include the Awami National Party (ANP), the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), and the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI).
Suffrage: Universal at 21. Following the October 12, 1999, ouster of the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the military-led government stated its intention to restructure the political and electoral systems. Elections for local government are anticipated in late 2000. No time frame has yet been provided for provincial and national elections.
Political subdivisions: Each of the four provinces--Punjab, Sindh, Northwest Frontier, and Balochistan--comes under the authority of the Governor and provincial cabinet, appointed by the Chief Executive. The Northern Areas and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) are administered by the federal government, but enjoy considerable autonomy.

Economy

GDP (1998-99): $59 billion.
Real annual growth rate 1998-99: 3.1%.
Per capita GDP (1998-99): $441.
Natural resources: Arable land, natural gas, limited petroleum, substantial hydropower potential, coal, iron ore.
Agriculture: *Products*--wheat, cotton, rice, sugarcane, tobacco.
Industry: *Types*--textiles, fertilizer, steel products, chemicals, food processing, oil and gas products, cement.
Trade (FY 1998-99): *Exports*--$7.8 billion: raw cotton, rice, cotton yarn, textiles, fruits, vegetables. *Major partners*--U.S., Japan, U.K., Saudi Arabia, Germany. *Imports*--$9.4 billion: wheat, crude oil, cooking oil, fertilizers, machinery. *Major partners*--U.S., Japan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, U.K., Sri Lanka.

PEOPLE

The majority of Pakistan's population lives along the Indus River valley and along an arc formed by the cities of Faisalabad, Lahore, Rawalpindi/Islamabad, and Peshawar.

Although the official language of Pakistan is Urdu, it is spoken as a first language by only 9% of the population; 65% speak Punjabi, 11% Sindhi, and 24% speak other languages (Pushtu, Saraiki, Baloch, Brahui). Urdu, Punjabi, Pushtu, and Baloch are Indo-European languages; Brahui is believed to have Dravidian (pre-Indo-European) origins. English is widely used within the government, the officer ranks of the military, and in many institutions of higher learning.

HISTORY

Archeological explorations have revealed impressive ruins of a 4,500-year old urban civilization in Pakistan's Indus River valley. The reason for the collapse of this highly developed culture is unknown. A major theory is that it was crushed by successive invasions (circa 2000 B.C. and 1400 B.C.) of Aryans, Indo-European warrior tribes from the Caucasus region in what is now Russia. The Aryans were followed in 500 B.C. by Persians and, in 326 B.C., by Alexander the Great. The "Gandhara culture" flourished in much of present-day Pakistan.

The Indo-Greek descendants of Alexander the Great saw the most creative period of the Gandhara (Buddhist) culture. For 200 years after the Kushan Dynasty was established in A.D. 50, Taxila (near Islamabad) became a renowned center of learning, philosophy, and art.

Pakistan's Islamic history began with the arrival of Muslim traders in the 8th century. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Mogul Empire dominated most of South Asia, including much of present-day Pakistan.

British traders arrived in South Asia in 1601, but the British Empire did not consolidate control of the region until the latter half of the 18th century. After 1850, the British or those influenced by them governed virtually the entire subcontinent.

In the early 20th century, South Asian leaders began to agitate for a greater degree of autonomy. Growing concern about Hindu domination of the Indian National Congress Party, the movement's foremost organization, led Muslim leaders to form the all-India Muslim League in 1906. In 1913, the League formally adopted the same objective as the Congress -- self-government for India within the British Empire -- but Congress and the League were unable to agree on a formula that would ensure the protection of Muslim religious, economic, and political rights.

Pakistan and Partition

The idea of a separate Muslim state emerged in the 1930s. On March 23, 1940, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League, formally endorsed the "Lahore Resolution," calling for the creation of an independent state in regions where Muslims constituted a majority. At the end of World War II, the United Kingdom moved with increasing urgency to grant India independence. However, the Congress Party and the Muslim League could not agree on the terms for a constitution or establishing an interim government. In June 1947, the British Government declared that it would bestow full dominion status upon two successor states -- India and Pakistan. Under this arrangement, the various princely states could freely join either India or Pakistan. Consequently, a bifurcated Muslim nation separated by more than 1,600 kilometers (1,000 mi.) of Indian territory emerged when Pakistan became a self-governing dominion within the Commonwealth on August 14, 1947. West Pakistan comprised the contiguous Muslim-majority districts of present-day Pakistan; East Pakistan consisted of a single province, which is now Bangladesh.

The Maharaja of Kashmir was reluctant to make a decision on accession to either Pakistan or India. However, armed incursions into the state by tribesman from the NWFP led him to seek military assistance from India. The Maharaja signed accession papers in October 1947 and allowed Indian troops into much of the state. The Government of Pakistan, however, refused to recognize the accession and campaigned to reverse the decision. The status of Kashmir has remained in dispute.

After Independence

With the death in 1948 of its first head of state, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and the assassination in 1951 of its first Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan, political instability and economic difficulty became prominent features of post-independence Pakistan. On October 7, 1958, President Iskander Mirza, with the support of the army, suspended the 1956 constitution, imposed martial law, and canceled the elections scheduled for January 1959. Twenty days later the military sent Mirza into exile in Britain and Gen. Mohammad Ayub Khan assumed control of a military dictatorship. After Pakistan's loss in the 1965 war against India, Ayub Khan's power declined. Subsequent political and economic grievances inspired agitation movements that compelled his resignation in March 1969. He handed over responsibility for governing to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan, who became President and Chief Martial Law Administrator.

General elections held in December 1970 polarized relations between the eastern and western sections of Pakistan. The Awami League, which advocated autonomy for the more populous East Pakistan, swept the East Pakistan seats to gain a majority in Pakistan as a whole. The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), founded and led by Ayub Khan's former Foreign Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, won a majority of the seats in West Pakistan, but the country was completely split with neither major party having any support in the other area. Negotiations to form a coalition government broke down and a civil war ensued. India attacked East Pakistan and captured Dhaka in December 1971, when the eastern section declared itself the independent nation of Bangladesh. Yahya Khan then resigned the presidency and handed over leadership of the western part of Pakistan to Bhutto, who became President and the first civilian Chief Martial Law Administrator.

Bhutto moved decisively to restore national confidence and pursued an active foreign policy, taking a leading role in Islamic and Third World forums. Although Pakistan did not formally join the non-aligned movement until 1979, the position of the Bhutto government coincided largely with that of the non-aligned nations. Domestically, Bhutto pursued a populist agenda and nationalized major industries and the banking system. In 1973, he promulgated a new constitution accepted by most political elements and relinquished the presidency to become Prime Minister. Although Bhutto continued his populist and socialist rhetoric, he increasingly relied on Pakistan's urban industrialists and rural landlords. Over time the economy stagnated, largely as a result of the dislocation and uncertainty produced by Bhutto's frequently changing economic policies. When Bhutto proclaimed his own victory in the March 1977 national elections, the opposition Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) denounced the results as fraudulent and demanded new elections. Bhutto resisted and later arrested the PNA leadership.

1977-1985 Martial Law

With increasing anti-government unrest, the army grew restive. On July 5, 1977, the military removed Bhutto from power and arrested him, declared martial law, and suspended portions of the 1973 constitution. Chief of Army Staff Gen. Muhammad Zia ul-Haq became Chief Martial Law Administrator and promised to hold new elections within three months.

Zia released Bhutto and asserted that he could contest new elections scheduled for October 1977. However, after it became clear that Bhutto's popularity had survived his government, Zia postponed the elections and began criminal investigations of the senior PPP leadership. Subsequently, Bhutto was convicted and sentenced to death for alleged conspiracy to murder a political opponent. Despite international appeals on his behalf, Bhutto was hanged on April 6, 1979.

Zia assumed the Presidency and called for elections in November. However, fearful of a PPP victory, Zia banned political activity in October 1979 and postponed national elections.

In 1980, most center and left parties, led by the PPP, formed the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD). The MRD demanded Zia's resignation, an end to martial law, new elections, and restoration of the constitution as it existed before Zia's takeover. In early December 1984, President Zia proclaimed a national referendum for December 19 on his "Islamization" program. He implicitly linked approval of "Islamization" with a mandate for his continued presidency. Zia's opponents, led by the MRD, boycotted the elections. When the government claimed a 63% turnout, with more than 90% approving the referendum, many observers questioned these figures.

On March 3, 1985, President Zia proclaimed constitutional changes designed to increase the power of the President vis-a-vis the Prime Minister (under the 1973 constitution the President had been mainly a figurehead). Subsequently, Zia nominated Muhammad Khan Junejo, a Muslim League member, as Prime Minister. The new National Assembly unanimously endorsed Junejo as Prime Minister and, in October 1985, passed Zia's proposed eighth amendment to the constitution, legitimizing the actions of the martial law government, exempting them from judicial review (including decisions of the military courts), and enhancing the powers of the President.

The Democratic Interregnum

On December 30, 1985, President Zia removed martial law and restored the fundamental rights safeguarded under the constitution. He also lifted the Bhutto government's declaration of emergency powers. The first months of 1986 witnessed a rebirth of political activity throughout Pakistan. All parties -- including those continuing to deny the legitimacy of the Zia/Junejo government -- were permitted to organize and hold rallies. In April 1986, PPP leader Benazir Bhutto, daughter of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, returned to Pakistan from exile in Europe.

Following the lifting of martial law, the increasing political independence of Prime Minister Junejo and his differences with Zia over Afghan policy resulted in tensions between them. On May 29, 1988, President Zia dismissed the Junejo government and called for November elections. In June, Zia proclaimed the supremacy in Pakistan of Shari'a (Islamic law), by which all civil law had to conform to traditional Muslim edicts.

On August 17, a plane carrying President Zia, American Ambassador Arnold Raphel, U.S. Brig. General Herbert Wassom, and 28 Pakistani military officers crashed on a return flight from a military equipment trial near Bahawalpur, killing all of its occupants. In accordance with the constitution, Chairman of the Senate Ghulam Ishaq Khan became Acting President and announced that elections scheduled for November 1988 would take place.

After winning 93 of the 205 National Assembly seats contested, the PPP, under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto, formed a coalition government with several smaller parties, including the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM). The Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI), a multi-party coalition led by the PML and including religious right parties such as the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), won 55 National Assembly seats.

Differing interpretations of constitutional authority, debates over the powers of the central government relative to those of the provinces, and the antagonistic relationship between the Bhutto Administration and opposition governments in Punjab and Balochistan seriously impeded social and economic reform programs. Ethnic conflict, primarily in Sindh province, exacerbated these problems. A fragmentation in the governing coalition and the military's reluctance to support an apparently ineffectual and corrupt government were accompanied by a significant deterioration in law and order.

In August 1990, President Khan, citing his powers under the eighth amendment to the constitution, dismissed the Bhutto government and dissolved the national and provincial assemblies. New elections, held in October of 1990, confirmed the political ascendancy of the IJI. In addition to a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, the alliance acquired control of all four provincial parliaments and enjoyed the support of the military and of President Khan. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, as leader of the PML, the most prominent Party in the IJI, was elected Prime Minister by the National Assembly.

Sharif emerged as the most secure and powerful Pakistani Prime Minister since the mid-1970s. Under his rule, the IJI achieved several important political victories. The implementation of Sharif's economic reform program, involving privatization, deregulation, and encouragement of private sector economic growth, greatly improved Pakistan's economic performance and business climate. The passage into law in May 1991 of a Shari'a bill, providing for widespread Islamization, legitimized the IJI government among much of Pakistani society.

After PML President Junejo's death in March 1993, Sharif loyalists unilaterally nominated him as the next party leader. Consequently, the PML divided into the PML Nawaz (PML/N) group, loyal to the Prime Minister, and the PML Junejo group (PML/J), supportive of Hamid Nasir Chatta, the President of the PML/J group.

However, Nawaz Sharif was not able to reconcile the different objectives of the IJI's constituent parties. The largest religious party, Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), abandoned the alliance because of its perception of PML hegemony. The regime was weakened further by the military's suppression of the MQM, which had entered into a coalition with the IJI to contain PPP influence, and allegations of corruption directed at Nawaz Sharif. In April 1993, President Khan, citing "maladministration, corruption, and nepotism" and espousal of political violence, dismissed the Sharif government, but the following month the Pakistan Supreme Court reinstated the National Assembly and the Nawaz Sharif government. Continued tensions between Sharif and Khan resulted in governmental gridlock and the Chief of Army Staff brokered an arrangement under which both the President and the Prime Minister resigned their offices in July 1993.

An interim government, headed by Moeen Qureshi, a former World Bank Vice President, took office with a mandate to hold national and provincial parliamentary elections in October. Despite its brief term, the Qureshi government adopted political, economic, and social reforms that generated considerable domestic support and foreign admiration.

In the October 1993 elections, the PPP won a plurality of seats in the National Assembly and Benazir Bhutto was asked to form a government. However, because it did not acquire a majority in the National Assembly, the PPP's control of the government depended upon the continued support of numerous independent parties, particularly the PML/J. The unfavorable circumstances surrounding PPP rule -- the imperative of preserving a coalition government, the formidable opposition of Nawaz Sharif's PML/N movement, and the insecure provincial administrations -- presented significant difficulties for the government of Prime Minister Bhutto. However, the election of Prime Minister Bhutto's close associate, Farooq Leghari, as President in November 1993 gave her a stronger power base.

In November 1996, President Leghari dismissed the Bhutto government, charging it with corruption, mismanagement of the economy, and implication in extra-judicial killings in Karachi. Elections in February 1997 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the PML/Nawaz, and President Leghari called upon Nawaz Sharif to form a government. In March 1997, with the unanimous support of the National Assembly, Sharif amended the constitution, stripping the President of the power to dismiss the government and making his power to appoint military service chiefs and provincial governors contingent on the "advice" of the Prime Minister. Another amendment prohibited elected members from "floor crossing" or voting against party lines. The Sharif government engaged in a protracted dispute with the judiciary, culminating in the storming of the Supreme Court by ruling party loyalists and the engineered dismissal of the Chief Justice and the resignation of President Leghari in December 1997. The new President elected by Parliament, Rafiq Tarar, was a close associate of the Prime Minister. A one-sided accountability campaign was used to target opposition politicians and critics of the regime. Similarly, the government moved to restrict press criticism and ordered the arrest and beating of prominent journalists. As domestic criticism of Sharif's administration intensified, Sharif attempted to replace Chief of Army Staff General Pervez Musharraf on October 12, 1999, with a family loyalist, Director General ISI Lt. Gen. Ziauddin. Although General Musharraf was out of the country at the time, the Army moved quickly to depose Sharif.

On October 14, 1999, General Musharraf declared a state of emergency and issued the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO), which suspended the federal and provincial parliaments, held the constitution in abeyance, and designated Musharraf as Chief Executive. While delivering an ambitious seven-point reform agenda, Musharraf has not yet provided a timeline for a return to civilian, democratic rule, although local elections are anticipated at the end of calendar year 2000. Musharraf has appointed a National Security Council, with mixed military/civilian appointees, a civilian Cabinet, and a National Reconstruction Bureau (think tank) to formulate structural reforms. A National Accountability Bureau (NAB), headed by an active duty military officer, is prosecuting those accused of willful default on bank loans and corrupt practices, whose conviction can result in disqualification from political office for twenty-one years. The NAB Ordinance has attracted criticism for holding the accused without charge and, in some instances, access to legal counsel. While military trial courts were not established, on January 26, 2000, the government stipulated that Supreme, High, and Shari'a Court justices should swear allegiance to the Provisional Constitutional Order and the Chief Executive. Approximately 85 percent of justices acquiesced, but a handful of justices were not invited to take the oath and were forcibly retired. Political parties have not been banned, but a couple of dozen ruling party members remain detained, with Sharif and five colleagues facing charges of attempted hijacking.

GOVERNMENT

The Pakistan Constitution of 1973, amended substantially in 1985 under Zia, was suspended by the military government on October 12, 1999. Musharraf has committed to return Pakistan to democratic, civilian rule but the implications of his promised structural reforms on the country's previous parliamentary system are unknown.

Under the Provisional Constitutional Order and its amendments, all power flows from and to the Chief Executive, who also holds the posts of Chief of Army Staff and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Judiciary is proscribed from issuing any order contrary to the decisions of the Chief Executive, and the President, Cabinet, National Security Council, and Governors serve at his discretion. In practice, Musharraf consults extensively with his civilian appointees and Corps Commanders and in certain policy areas (e.g., economic reform) civilian appointees have exhibited wide policy latitude.

Although the Judiciary was compelled to take an oath to the PCO and the Chief Executive, courts continue to function and exercise that authority which does not conflict with the PCO. The Supreme Court is Pakistan's highest court. The President, in consultation with the Chief Executive, appoints the Chief Justice and they together determine the other judicial appointments. Each province has a high court, the justices of which are appointed by the President after conferring with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the provincial chief justice.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Pakistan's 610,000-member armed forces, the world's eighth largest, are well trained and disciplined. However, budget constraints and nation-building duties have reduced Pakistan's normal robust training tempo, which if not reversed, will eventually impact on the operational readiness of the Armed Forces. Likewise, Pakistan has had an increasingly difficult time maintaining their aging fleet of United States, Chinese, United Kingdom and French equipment. While the industrial base capabilities have expanded significantly, limited fiscal resources and various sanctions have significantly constrained the government's efforts to modernize the armed forces.

Until 1990, the United States provided military aid to Pakistan to modernize its conventional defensive capability. The United States allocated about 40% of its assistance package to non-reimbursable credits for military purchases, the third largest program behind Israel and Egypt. The remainder of the aid program was devoted to economic assistance. While sanctions have been in effect since 1990, various amendments have authorized return of spare parts and end items already paid for by Pakistan. In addition, the U.S. and Pakistan have come to a financial agreement on the non-delivery of F-16s. However, Pakistan's nuclear tests in response to India's May 1998 tests and the recent military coup have placed additional sanctions on Pakistan.

Principal Government Officials

President--Rafiq Tarar
Chief Executive--General Pervez Musharraf
Minister of Foreign Affairs--Abdul Sattar
Ambassador to the U.S.--Maleeha Lodhi
Ambassador to the UN--Shamshad Ahmed

Pakistan maintains an embassy in the United States at 2315 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20008 (Tel.

202-939-6200).

ECONOMY

Extreme poverty and underdevelopment in Pakistan, as well as fiscal mismanagement that has produced a large foreign debt, obscure the potential of a country which has the resources and entrepreneurial skill to support rapid economic growth. In fact, the economy averaged an impressive growth rate of 6 percent per year during the 1980s and early 1990s. However, the economy is extremely vulnerable to Pakistan's external and internal shocks, such as in 1992-93, when devastating floods and political uncertainty combined to depress economic growth sharply and the financial crisis in Asia which hit major markets for Pakistani textile exports. Average real GDP growth from 1992 to 1998 dipped to 4.1 percent annually.

Since the early 1980s, the government has pursued market-based economic reform policies. Market-based reforms began to take hold in 1988, when the government launched an ambitious IMF-assisted structural adjustment program in response to chronic and unsustainable fiscal and external account deficits. Since that time the government has removed barriers to foreign trade and investment, begun to reform the financial system, eased foreign exchange controls, and privatized dozens of state-owned enterprises. Pakistan continues to struggle with these reforms, having mixed success, especially in reducing its budget and current account deficits. The budget deficit in FY 1996-97 was 6.4% of GDP. Initial data implied a reduction in 1997-98 to 5.4% and in 1998-99 to 4.3%, but revised data indicates that the deficit is probably still over 5.0%. In that same 2-year period, the rupee was devalued against the dollar 12% and 10.5% respectively.

Economic reform was further set back by Pakistan's nuclear tests in May 1998 and the subsequent economic sanctions imposed by the G-7. International default was narrowly averted by the partial waiver of sanctions and the subsequent reinstatement of Pakistan's IMF ESAF/EFF in early 1999, followed by Paris Club and London Club reschedulings. The Sharif government had difficulty meeting the conditionality of the IMF program, which was suspended in July 1999. The current government has announced a program of reforms and is in discussion with the IMF regarding a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility to begin in July 2000.

With a per capita GDP of about USD 441, the World Bank considers Pakistan a low-income country. No more than 39 percent of adults are literate, and life expectancy is about 62 years or less. The population, currently about 130 million, is growing at about 2.6%, very close to the GDP growth rate. Relatively few resources have been devoted to socio-economic development on infrastructure projects. Inadequate provision of social services and high population growth have contributed to a persistence of poverty and unequal income distribution.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Pakistan's principal natural resources are arable land and water.

About 25% of Pakistan's total land area is under cultivation and is watered by one of the largest irrigation systems in the world. Agriculture accounts for about 24% of GDP and employs about 50% of the labor force. The most important crops are wheat, sugarcane, cotton, and rice, which together account for more than 75% of the value of total crop output. Despite intensive farming practices, Pakistan remains a net food importer. Pakistan exports rice, cotton, fish, fruits, and vegetables and imports vegetable oil, wheat, cotton, pulses and consumer foods.

The economic importance of agriculture has declined since independence, when its share of GDP was around 53%. Following the poor harvest of 1993, the government introduced agriculture assistance policies, including increased support prices for many agricultural commodities and expanded availability of agricultural credit. From 1993 to 1997, real growth in the agricultural sector averaged 5.7% but has since declined to less than 4%. Agricultural reforms, including increased wheat and oilseed production, play a central role in the new government's economic reform package.

Pakistan has extensive energy resources, including fairly sizable natural gas reserves, some proven oil reserves, coal, and large hydropower potential. However, the exploitation of energy resources has been slow due to a shortage of capital and domestic political constraints. For instance, domestic petroleum production totals only about half the country's oil needs. The need to import oil also contributes to Pakistan's persistent trade deficits and the shortage of foreign exchange. The current government has announced that privatization in the oil and gas sector is a priority, as is the substitution of indigenous gas for imported oil, especially in the production of power.

Industry

Pakistan's manufacturing sector accounts for about 26% of GDP. Cotton textile production and apparel manufacturing are Pakistan's largest industries, accounting for about 64% of total exports. Other major industries include cement, fertilizer, edible oil, sugar, steel, tobacco, chemicals, machinery, and food processing. Despite ongoing government efforts to privatize large-scale parastatal units, the public sector continues to account for a significant proportion of industry. In FY 1998-99, gross fixed capital formation in the public sector accounted for about 38% of the total. In the face of an increasing trade deficit, the government hopes to diversify the country's industrial base and bolster export industries.

Foreign Trade and Aid

Weak world demand for its exports and domestic political uncertainty have contributed to Pakistan's high trade deficit. In FY 1998-99, Pakistan recorded a current account deficit of $1.7 billion, only a slight improvement over the FY 1997-98 current account deficit of $1.9 billion. Pakistan's exports continue to be dominated by cotton textiles and apparel, despite government diversification efforts. Major imports include petroleum and petroleum products, edible oil, wheat, chemicals, fertilizer, capital goods, industrial raw materials, and consumer products. External imbalance has left Pakistan with a growing foreign debt burden. Principal and interest payments in FY 1998-99 totaled $2.6 billion, more than double the amount paid in FY 1989-90. Annual debt service now exceeds 34% of export earnings.

Pakistan receives about $2.5 billion per year in loan/grant assistance from international financial institutions (e.g., the IMF, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank) and bilateral donors. Increasingly, the composition of assistance to Pakistan has shifted away from grants toward loans repayable in foreign exchange. All new U.S. economic assistance to Pakistan was suspended after October 1990, when then-President Bush could no longer certify under the Pressler Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act (Section 620e[e]) "that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device and that the proposed assistance package reduces significantly the risk that Pakistan will acquire a nuclear explosive device."

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Pakistan is a prominent member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and an active member of the United Nations. Its foreign policy encompasses historically difficult relations with India, a desire for a stable Afghanistan, long-standing close relations with China, extensive security and economic interests in the Persian Gulf, and wide-ranging bilateral relations with the United States and other Western countries.

India

Since partition, relations between Pakistan and India have been characterized by rivalry and suspicion. Although many issues divide the two countries, the most sensitive one since independence has been the status of Kashmir.

At the time of partition, the princely state of Kashmir, though ruled by a Hindu Maharajah, had an overwhelmingly Muslim population. When the Maharajah hesitated in acceding to either Pakistan or India in 1947, some of his Muslim subjects, aided by tribesmen from Pakistan, revolted in favor of joining Pakistan. In exchange for military assistance in containing the revolt, the Kashmiri ruler offered his allegiance to India. Indian troops occupied the eastern portion of Kashmir, including its capital, Srinagar, while the western part came under Pakistani control.

India addressed this dispute in the United Nations on January 1, 1948. One year later, the UN arranged a cease-fire along a line dividing Kashmir, but leaving the northern end of the line undemarcated and the vale of Kashmir (with the majority of the population) under Indian control. India and Pakistan agreed with Indian resolutions which called for a UN-supervised plebiscite to determine the state's future.

Full-scale hostilities erupted in September 1965, when India alleged that insurgents trained and supplied by Pakistan were operating in India-controlled Kashmir. Hostilities ceased three weeks later, following mediation efforts by the UN and interested countries. In January 1966, Indian and Pakistani representatives met in Tashkent, U.S.S.R., and agreed to attempt a peaceful settlement of Kashmir and their other differences.

Following the 1971 Indo-Pakistan conflict, President Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi met in the mountain town of Shimla, India, in July 1972. They agreed to a line of control in Kashmir resulting from the December 17, 1971 cease-fire, and endorsed the principle of settlement of bilateral disputes through peaceful means. In 1974, Pakistan and India agreed to resume postal and telecommunications linkages, and to enact measures to facilitate travel. Trade and diplomatic relations were restored in 1976 after a hiatus of five years.

India's nuclear test in 1974 generated great uncertainty in Pakistan and is generally acknowledged to have been the impetus for Pakistan's nuclear weapons development program. In 1983, the Pakistani and Indian governments accused each other of aiding separatists in their respective countries, i.e., Sikhs in India's Punjab state and Sindhis in Pakistan's Sindh province. In April 1984, tensions erupted after troops were deployed to the Siachen Glacier, a high-altitude desolate area close to the China border left undemarcated by the cease-fire agreement (Karachi Agreement) signed by Pakistan and India in 1949.

Tensions diminished after Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister in November 1984 and after a group of Sikh hijackers was brought to trial by Pakistan in March 1985. In December 1985, President Zia and Prime Minister Gandhi pledged not to attack each other's nuclear facilities. (A formal "no attack" agreement was signed in January 1991.) In early 1986, the Indian and Pakistani governments began high-level talks to resolve the Siachen Glacier border dispute and to improve trade.

Bilateral tensions increased in early 1990, when Kashmiri militants began a campaign of violence against Indian Government authority in Jammu and Kashmir. Subsequent high-level bilateral meetings relieved the tensions between India and Pakistan, but relations worsened again after the destruction of the Ayodhya Mosque by Hindu extremists in December 1992 and terrorist bombings in Bombay in March 1993. Talks between the Foreign Secretaries of both countries in January 1994 resulted in deadlock.

In the last several years, the Indo-Pakistani relationship has veered sharply between rapprochement and conflict. After taking office in February 1997, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif moved to resume official dialog with India. A number of meetings at the foreign secretary and prime ministerial level took place, with positive atmospherics but little concrete progress. The relationship improved markedly when Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee traveled to Lahore for a summit with Sharif in February 1999. There was considerable hope that the meeting could lead to a breakthrough. Unfortunately, in spring 1999 infiltrators from Pakistan occupied positions on the Indian side of the Line of

Control in the remote, mountainous area of Kashmir near Kargil, threatening the ability of India to supply its forces on Siachen Glacier. By early summer, serious fighting flared in the Kargil sector. The infiltrators withdrew following a meeting between Prime Minister Sharif and President Clinton in July. Relations between India and Pakistan have since been particularly strained, especially since the October 12, 1999 coup in Islamabad.

Afghanistan

Following the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Pakistani Government played a vital role in supporting the Afghan resistance movement and assisting Afghan refugees. After the Soviet withdrawal in February 1989, Pakistan, with cooperation from the world community, continued to provide extensive support for displaced Afghans. In 1999, the United States provided approximately $70 million in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in Pakistan, mainly through multilateral organizations and NGOs. As such, the United States in 1999 was the largest single donor. In 1999, more than 1.2 million registered Afghan refugees remained in Pakistan, as fighting between rival factions continued. Pakistan has recognized the Taliban as the government in Afghanistan and provides the Taliban assistance. Pakistan has periodically offered to try to help bring Afghanistan's warring factions to the negotiating table, thus far with negligible results.

Russian Federation

Under military leader Ayub Khan, Pakistan sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union; trade and cultural exchanges between the two countries increased between 1966 and 1971. However, Soviet criticism of Pakistan's position in the 1971 war with India weakened bilateral relations, and many Pakistanis believed that the August 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Cooperation encouraged Indian belligerency. Subsequent Soviet arms sales to India, amounting to billions of dollars on concessional terms, reinforced this argument.

During the 1980s, tensions increased between the Soviet Union and Pakistan because of the latter's key role in helping to organize political and material support for the Afghan rebel forces. The withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and the collapse of the former Soviet Union resulted in significantly improved bilateral relations, but Pakistan's support for and recognition of the Taliban regime in neighboring Afghanistan is an ongoing source of tension.

People's Republic of China

In 1950, Pakistan was among the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.). Following the Sino-Indian hostilities of 1962, Pakistan's relations with China became stronger; since then, the two countries have regularly exchanged high-level visits resulting in a variety of agreements. China has provided economic, military, and technical assistance to Pakistan.

Favorable relations with China have been a pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy. The P.R.C. strongly supported Pakistan's opposition to Soviet involvement in Afghanistan and is perceived by Pakistan as a regional counterweight to India and Russia.

Iran and the Persian Gulf

Historically, Pakistan has had close geopolitical and cultural-religious linkages with Iran. However, strains in the relationship appeared in the last decade. Pakistan and Iran support opposing factions in the Afghan conflict. Also, some Pakistanis suspect Iranian support for the sectarian violence which has plagued Pakistan. Nevertheless, Pakistan pursues an active diplomatic relationship with Iran, including recent overtures to seek a negotiated settlement between Afghanistan's warring factions.

Despite popular support for Iraq in 1991, the Pakistani government supported the coalition against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and sent 11,600 troops to defend Saudi Arabia. Pakistan provides military personnel to strengthen Gulf-state defenses and to reinforce its own security interests in the area.

U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

The United States and Pakistan established diplomatic relations in 1947. The U.S. agreement to provide economic and military assistance to Pakistan and the latter's partnership in the Baghdad Pact/CENTO and SEATO strengthened relations between the two nations. However, the U.S. suspension of military assistance during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war generated a widespread feeling in Pakistan that the United States was not a reliable ally. Even though the United States suspended military assistance to both countries involved in the conflict, the suspension of aid affected Pakistan much more severely. Gradually, relations improved and arms sales were renewed in 1975. Then, in April 1979, the United States cut off economic assistance to Pakistan, except food assistance, as required under the Symington Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, due to concerns about Pakistan's nuclear program.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 highlighted the common interest of Pakistan and the United States in peace and stability in South Asia. In 1981, the United States and Pakistan agreed on a $3.2-billion military and economic assistance program aimed at helping Pakistan deal with the heightened threat to security in the region and its economic development needs.

Recognizing national security concerns and accepting Pakistan's assurances that it did not intend to construct a nuclear weapon, Congress waived restrictions (Symington Amendment) on military assistance to Pakistan. In March 1986, the two countries agreed on a second multi-year (FY 1988-93) $4-billion economic development and security assistance program. On October 1, 1990, however, the United States suspended all military assistance and new economic aid to Pakistan under the Pressler

Amendment, which required that the President certify annually that Pakistan "does not possess a nuclear explosive device."

There have been several incidents of violence against American officials and U.S. mission employees in Pakistan. In November 1979, false rumors that the United States had participated in the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca provoked a mob attack on the U.S. embassy in Islamabad. The government's delayed response enabled the mob to burn the embassy. Four people died, two of them U.S. nationals. The American Cultural Center in Lahore also was destroyed by fire. In 1989, there was an attack on the American Center in Islamabad, where six Pakistanis were killed in the crossfire with the police. In March of 1995, two American employees of the consulate in Karachi were killed and one wounded in an attack on the home-to-office shuttle. In November of 1997, four U.S. businessmen were brutally murdered while being driven to work in Karachi. In November 1999, the Embassy and the American Center were the targets of rocket attacks that wounded one local national security guard.

The decision by India to conduct nuclear tests in May 1998 and Pakistan's matching response set back U.S. relations in the region, which had seen renewed U.S. Government interest during the second Clinton Administration. A presidential visit scheduled for the first quarter of 1998 was postponed and, under the Glenn Amendment, sanctions restricted the provision of credits, military sales, economic assistance, and loans to the government. An intensive dialogue on nuclear nonproliferation and security issues between Deputy Secretary Talbott and Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad was initiated, with discussions focusing on CTBT signature and ratification, FMCT negotiations, export controls, and a nuclear restraint regime. The October 1999 overthrow of the democratically elected Sharif government triggered an additional layer of sanctions under Section 508 of the Foreign Appropriations Act which include restrictions on foreign military financing and economic assistance. Presently, U.S. Government assistance to Pakistan is limited mainly to refugee and counter-narcotics assistance.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador--William B. Milam
Deputy Chief of Mission--Michele J. Sison
Defense Attache--Col. Herb Stoddard
Defense Representative--Col. Tod Wilson
Counselor for Political Affairs--John R. Schmidt
Counselor for Economic Affairs--James S. Elliott
Public Affairs Officer--Lee James Irwin
Consul General--David Donahue
Consul General, Karachi--John Bennett
Principal Officer, Lahore--Sheldon Rapoport
Principal Officer, Peshawar--David Katz

The U.S. Embassy is located at the Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5, Islamabad [Tel. (92)-(51)-2080-2000; telex 82-5-864].

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program provides Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets. **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. **Consular Information Sheets** exist for all countries and include information on immigration practices, currency regulations, health conditions, areas of instability, crime and security, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. posts in the country. **Public Announcements** are issued as a means to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas which pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. Free copies of this information are available by calling the Bureau of Consular Affairs at 202-647-5225 or via the fax-on-demand system: 202-647-3000. Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets also are available on the Consular Affairs Internet home page: http://travel.state.gov and the Consular Affairs Bulletin Board (CABB). To access CABB, dial the modem number: 301-946-4400 (it will accommodate up to 33,600 bps), set terminal communications program to N-8-1(no parity, 8 bits, 1 stop bit); and terminal emulation to VT100. The login is travel and the password is info. (Note: Lower case is required). The CABB also carries international security information from the Overseas Security Advisory Council and Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security. Consular Affairs Trips for Travelers publication series, which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954; telephone: 202-512-1800; fax 202-512-2250.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained from the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at (202) 647-5225. For after-hours emergencies, Sundays and holidays, call 202-647-4000.

Passport Services information can be obtained by calling the 24-hour, 7-day a week automated system ($.35 per minute) or live operators 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (EST) Monday-Friday ($1.05 per minute). The number is 1-900-225-5674 (TDD: 1-900-225-7778). Major credit card users (for a flat rate of $4.95) may call 1-888-362-8668 (TDD: 1-888-498-3648).

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) and a web site at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. A booklet entitled Health Information for International Travel (HHS publication number CDC-95-8280) is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, tel. (202) 512-1800.

Information on travel conditions, visa requirements, currency and customs regulations, legal holidays, and other items of interest to travelers also may be obtained before your departure from a country's embassy and/or consulates in the U.S. (for this country, see "Principal Government Officials" listing in this publication).

U.S. citizens who are long-term visitors or traveling in dangerous areas are encouraged to register at the U.S. embassy upon arrival in a country (see "Principal U.S. Embassy Officials" listing in this publication). This may help family members contact you in case of an emergency.

Further Electronic Information

Department of State Foreign Affairs Network. Available on the Internet, DOSFAN provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information. Updated daily, DOSFAN includes Background Notes; Dispatch, the official magazine of U.S. foreign policy; daily press briefings; Country Commercial Guides; directories of key officers of foreign service posts; etc. DOSFAN's World Wide Web site is at http://www.state.gov.

National Trade Data Bank (NTDB). Operated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the NTDB contains a wealth of trade-related information. It is available on the Internet (www.stat-usa.gov) and on CD-ROM. Call the NTDB Help-Line at (202) 482-1986 for more information.

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William B. Milam
U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan

William B. Milam, former ambassador to Bangladesh, was recently named U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The Senate confirmed his nomination on July 31, 1998.

A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Ambassador Milam previously served as deputy assistant secretary for international finance and development, as special negotiator for the environment, and as deputy chief of mission in Yaounde. His most recent posting was as deputy chief of mission in Monrovia. Ambassador Milam received a bachelor's degree from Stanford University and a master's degree from the University of Michigan. He has received two Presidential awards for outstanding service as well as the James Clement Dunn Award for mid-level officers and a Superior Honor Award.

Key U.S. Officials in Islamabad

Deputy Chief of Mission
Michelle J. Sison

Political Affairs
John R. Schmidt

Economic Affairs
James S. Elliott

Consular Affairs
David T. Donahue

Administrative Affairs
W. Douglas Frank

Regional Security Affairs
Martin T. Donnelly

Public Affairs
Lee J. Irwin